

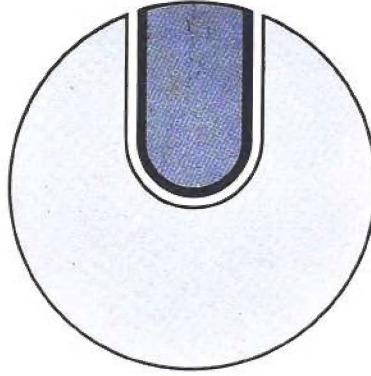
# कुटियार्ताम माहोत्सवम्

Sangeet Natak Akademi





**KŪṬIYĀṬṬAM MAHOTSAVAM**  
**24 – 29 March 1995**



Festival logo:

**Urdhvapundra** — the Kuri or forehead mark of Vibhishana, a red centre field outlined in black surrounded by white in U- shape on a green base.

**Sangeet Natak Akademi**

*Our grateful thanks to*

Government of Kerala

Pandit K.P. Narayana Pisharody

V.S. Sharma

K. Ayyappa Paniker

Killimangalam Vasudevan Namboodiripad

L.S. Rajagopalan

S. Ganesa Aiyar

G. Venu

Sudha Gopalakrishnan

S. Srinivasan

Ayyappa Seva Samiti, Ayyappa Temple, New Delhi

Arsha Dharma Parishad, Uttara Guruvayoor Temple, New Delhi

Central Cottage Industries Emporium, New Delhi

*Facing page :*  
Wooden statuette of  
Vidushaka at the Kitangur  
temple of Kerala

*Festival credits*

Festival logo and design : Benoy Sarkar

Photographs : SNA, Parisar, Benoy Behl

Stage : H.V. Sharma

Lights : Gautam Bhattacharya

Compere : Leela Venkataraman

*Published by*

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**24 March 1995, 6.30 P.M.**

**Inaugural Programme**

**Welcome : Usha Malik, Secretary, Sangeet Natak Akademi**

**Release and presentation of special issue of SANGEET NATAK on Kutiyattam  
edited by Prof. K. Ayyappa Paniker :**

**by Dr. Prem Lata Sharma, Vice-Chairman, Sangeet Natak Akademi,  
to Dr. V.S. Sharma, Chairman of Kerala Kalamandalam and Vice President of Margi**

**Inauguration : Pandit K.P. Narayana Pisharody**

**Kutiyattam Performance : UDYANA PRAVESAM**

**by Guru Ammannur Madhava Chakyar  
and artistes of Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam**





Sangeet Natak Akademi—the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama—was founded in 1953 for the furtherance of the performing arts of India, a task in which it cooperates with counterparts in the States and voluntary organisations all over the country. Through sponsorship, research and dissemination it seeks to achieve an enhanced public appreciation of music, dance and drama, together with a quickened exchange of ideas and techniques for the common gain of Indian performing arts.

Among the traditional forms of Indian Theatre, Kutiyattam has a unique and an exalted place. Believed to be our only surviving link with the ancient Sanskrit theatre, Kutiyattam has been practised, preserved and developed over centuries by the Chakyars of Kerala. Sangeet Natak Akademi takes great pleasure in presenting this national festival of Kutiyattam in Delhi. It is the first time that a major event focussed on this important tradition of Indian theatre is held in the Capital.

Kutiyattam Mahotsavam comes as an extension of a special project of support to Kutiyattam being implemented by the Akademi for the last four years. Though Akademi has been providing some measure of support to this rare art for many years, it is in April 1991 that a special project was initiated to provide direct substantial assistance which made a significant impact.

Performing in the festival are several leading artistes of Kutiyattam including the great master Guru Ammannur Madhava Chakyar, Akademi awardee Guru M. Kochukuttan Chakyar and the renowned expert of Mizhavu Guru P.K. Narayanan Nambiar. Among other eminent artistes featured in the festival are Shri C.K. Krishnan Nambiar and Shri Kitangur Kuttappan Chakyar. Participating in the festival are three renowned institutions of Kutiyattam – Kerala Kalamandalam, Cheruthuruthy; Margi, Thiruvananthapuram and Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam, Irinjalakuda. The Mani Madhav Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam, Lakkidi will also be represented through Guru P.K. Narayanan Nambiar. Among the traditional Chakyar families, the Ammannur, the Potiyil, the Koyppa, the Mani and the Kitangur will be represented in the festival.

An interesting and significant feature of the festival is the inclusion of Nangiar Kuttu, the dance theatre of the Nangiar women. An offshoot of Kutiyattam, Nangiar Kuttu tells the stories of Krishna's life through enactment of 217 *slokas* from *Srikrishna Charitam*.

The festival features eleven performances presenting different acts and scenes from four well-known ancient Sanskrit dramas namely : *Ascharyachudamani* of Shaktibhadra, *Subhadradhananjaya* of Kulasekhara Varman, *Abhiseka Nataka* of Bhasa and *Bhagavadajjukiyam* of Bodhayana. Excerpts from some



other plays such as, *Naganandam* of Harsha, *Pratijnayaugandharayanam* of Bhasa, *Mattavilasam* of Mahendra Vikrama and *Kalyana Saugandhikam* of Nilakantha can also be seen in performances planned exclusively for archival recording during the festival days.

Of the six evenings over which the festival is presented, the last evening's performances have special relevance, being presented in the two Kairali temples of Delhi – the Ayyappa Temple in Ramakrishna Puram and the Uttara Guruvayoorappan Temple in Mayur Vihar. On the first five days of the festival, from 24 to 28 March, performances will be held on a specially designed stage on the lawns of Rabindra Bhavan.

Together with the performances, a series of lecture-demonstrations, "Aspects of Kutiyattam" is presented 25-27 March 10.00 a.m. daily. The lec-dem series featuring demonstrations by masters with their disciples and lectures by the eminent scholars gives an opportunity to the students and *rasikas* of theatre arts in Delhi to understand the fundamentals of Kutiyattam, its technique, conventions and aesthetics.

An important dimension of the festival is documentation of Kutiyattam. All through the festival interviews, discussions, demonstrations and performances would be recorded on audio, video and film for the archives of the Akademi. This would yield rich source material for future research on Kutiyattam and Nangiar Kuttu.

On this occasion Akademi is bringing out a special issue of its quarterly journal SANGEET NATAK devoted to Kutiyattam edited by Prof. K. Ayyappa Paniker.

A festival of this nature can be successfully organised only with the support of various institutions and individuals committed to the preservation and promotion of traditional arts. We are thankful to the participating institutions as also to the eminent experts and others who helped plan and present this event. We are particularly grateful to Pandit K.P. Narayana Pisharody of Trichur for his valuable advice and gracious presence in Delhi to inaugurate the festival.

On the occasion of Kutiyattam Mahotsavam, Sangeet Natak Akademi gratefully recalls the contribution of Late D. Appukuttan Nair to the art of Kutiyattam. His ideas, concepts and his creative guidance to Akademi's Project of Support to Kutiyattam serve as the backdrop to this festival.

Sangeet Natak Akademi  
24 March 1995





## **SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI PROJECT OF SUPPORT TO KUTIYATTAM**

Akademi Project of Support to Kutiyattam was launched in March-April 1991 with the following objectives:

- To ensure and support a systematic process of transmission of the art from ageing gurus to the younger generation through an institutionalised set-up, incorporating the best elements of personalised training on the lines of traditional gurukulam;
- To sponsor regular year-round performances of Kutiyattam in order to provide economic sustenance to the artistes and to create a better understanding of and appreciative audience for the art.

With the above objectives in view, the following programme is being implemented under the project:

### **1. Developing Ammannur**

#### **Gurukulam as a pivotal centre for training in Kutiyattam**

Considering that Ammannur Madhava Chakyar is the sole surviving master of the older generation, whose services for the sustenance and revival of the tradition are of particular importance, it was decided to provide substantial funding for a training programme under him. Monthly honorarium for the teachers and musicians, fellowships and scholarships for students and subsidy for students' performances are being provided.

### **2. Developing Margi, Trivandrum as a centre for providing regular performance opportunities to trained artistes**

With a view to developing a centre for regular performances of Kutiyattam providing, inter alia, a source of employment/ income to

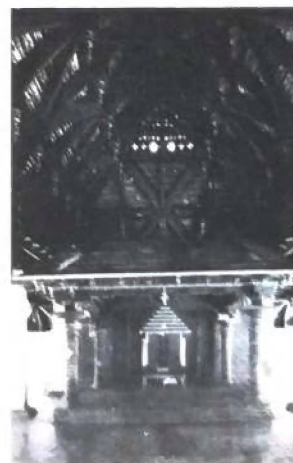
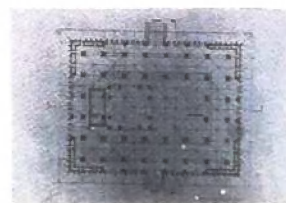
the practitioners of the art, Margi, Trivandrum, is being supported. Four performances every month are being sponsored here to be presented not only by the artistes of Margi, but also including individual artistes from other centres. This programme is directed to providing an ideal set-up for Kutiyattam performances in the contemporary context and thereby building, in the long run, a reliable audience base for the art.

### **3. Training in Mizhavu**

Apart from the above two major segments of the project, a special training programme in Mizhavu playing is also being conducted under Guru P.K. Narayanan Nambiar at Lakkidi providing honorarium to the guru and scholarships to students.

Keeping in view the success achieved so far, it has been decided to expand the scope of the project by including the following programmes from April 1995 :

1. Support to Kutiyattam artistes of Kerala Kalamandalam by sponsoring year-round performances in different parts of the state;
2. Reprinting of books on Kutiyattam;
3. Survey, collection, transcription and copying of palmleaf manuscripts for preservation;
4. A special programme of training and performance support to Nangiar Kuttu;
5. Instituting an annual festival of Kutiyattam in Kerala.







## PROGRAMME

### KUTTIYATTAM MAHOTSAVAM

24-29 March 1995

**Venue I: Rabindra Bhavan Lawns, Feeroze Shah Road, New Delhi**

**Friday 24 March 6.30 p.m**

**UDYANA PRAVESAM** from *Ashokavanikankam*, *Ascharyachudamani* (Act V) of Shaktibhadra  
Ammannur Madhava Chakyar, Usha Nangiar, Kapila, Nirmala Paniker

**AMMANNUR CHACHU CHAKYAR SMARAKA GURUKULAM, IRINJALAKUDA**

**Saturday 25 March 6.00 p.m.**

**SRIKRISHNALEELA** (Nangiar Kuttu)  
Margi Sathi

**SUBHADRADHANANJAYAM** from *Subhadradhananjaya* (Act I) of Kulasekhara Varman  
Margi Madhu, Margi Sathi, M. Kochukuttan Chakyar  
**MARGI, TRIVANDRUM**

**Sunday 26 March 6.00 p.m.**

**PUTANA MOKSHAM** (Nangiar Kuttu)  
Kalamandalam Shylaja

**SURPANAKHANKAM** from *Ascharyachudamani* (Act II) of Shaktibhadra  
Kalamandalam Rama Chakyar, Sivan Namboodiri, Shylaja, Girija, Ravindran

**KERALA KALAMANDALAM, CHERUTHURUTHY**

**Monday 27 March 6.30 p.m.**

**UDYANAVARNANAM** from *Bhagavadajjukiyam* of Bodhayana  
Kalamandalam Girija, Shylaja

**KERALA KALAMANDALAM, CHERUTHURUTHY**

**MAYASITANKAM** from *Ascharyachudamani* (Act III) of Shaktibhadra  
M. Kochukuttan Chakyar, Margi Madhu, Margi Narayanan, Margi Raman, Potiyil Narayanan, Margi Usha

**MARGI, TRIVANDRUM**

**Tuesday 28 March 6.30 p.m.**

**KAMSAVADHAM** (Nangiar Kuttu)  
Usha Nangiar

**BALIVADHAM** from *Abhiseka Nataka* (Act I) of Bhasa

Ammannur Madhava Chakyar, Ammanur Parameswaran, G. Venu, Sooraj Nambiar, Usha Nangiar, Kalamandalam Radhakrishnan, Ranjeeth

**AMMANNUR CHACHU CHAKYAR SMARAKA GURUKULAM, IRINJALAKUDA**

**Venue II: Ayyappa Temple, Sector-2, Ramakrishna Puram, New Delhi**

**Wednesday 29 March 7 p.m.**

**TORANAYUDDHAM** from *Abhiseka Nataka* (Act III) of Bhasa

Kalamandalam Rama Chakyar, Sivan Namboodiri, Krishna Kumar, Kanaka Kumar

**KERALA KALAMANDALAM, CHERUTHURUTHY**

**Venue III: Guruvayoorappan Temple, Mayur Vihar, Phase I, Delhi**

**Wednesday 29 March 7 p.m.**

**JATAYUVADHANKAM** from *Ascharyachudamani* (Act IV) of Shaktibhadra

Combined presentation by artistes of Kerala Kalamandalam, Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam and Margi

**Accompaniments on MIZHAVU, EDAKKA, THIMILA and KURUMKUZHAL**

P.K. Narayanan Nambiar, C.K. Krishnan Nambiar, O.N. Gopinathan Nambiar, Kalamandalam Unnikrishnan Nambiar, P.V. Iswaranunni, N. Subramanian Potti, M. Narayanan Nambudiri, Kalamandalam Mohanan, V.K. Hariharan, Kalanilayam Unnikrishnan, Margi Venugopalan, K.P. Narayanan Nambiar, A.N. Hariharan, Kalamandalam Achyutanandan, P.P. Rajeev, Kalamandalam Raman Unni, Sudhin Shankar

**CHUTTY (Make-up)**

Kalanilayam Parameswaran, P.M. Rama Mohan, R.L.V. Somadas, Raveendran, Kalanilayam Saji

**PETTY (Green Room Assistants)**

M. Kunjan, A.S. Rangan, V.K. Sreedharan, V. Shivakumar

**TROUPE MANAGERS**

Sasi Kumar: Margi, Trivandrum

P. Jayachandran: Kerala Kalamandalam, Cheruthuruthy

Ravi Gopalan Nair: Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam, Irinjalakuda



## **Lecture-Demonstrations : Aspects of Kutiyattam**

### **Programme**

**25-27 March 1995, 10 a.m. daily**

Meghdoot Open Air Theatre, Rabindra Bhavan Complex,  
Feroze Shah Road, New Delhi

**Saturday 25 March**

#### **10 Kutiyattam and Nangiar Kuttu : Training, Technique and Conventions**

by

Guru Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and Sri G. Venu  
Demonstration by artistes of Ammannur Gurukulam,  
Irinjalakuda

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan will preside

**Sunday 26 March**

**Kutiyattam : Aspects of Music**

by

Guru P.K. Narayanan Nambiar and Sri L.S. Rajagopalan  
Demonstration by artistes of Ammannur Gurukulam,  
Irinjalakuda and Kerala Kalamandalam, Cheruthuruthy

Dr. Prem Lata Sharma will preside

Followed by Mizhavu Thayambaka by Guru P.K. Narayanan  
Nambiar and disciples

**Monday 27 March**

**Kutiyattam: Text and Performance**

by

Prof. K. Ayyappa Paniker

Demonstration by artistes of Margi, Trivandrum

Pandit K.P. Narayana Pisharody will preside

## KUTIYATTAM

(Excerpts from 'Traditional Indian Theatre' by  
Dr Kapila Vatsyayan, 1980)

Kutiyattam is easily the most prominent survivor among the forms containing some essential elements of content and structural features of the Sanskrit theatre.

It is, however, also the precursor and pioneer of traditions of the Indian theatre which developed in different parts of India since the 10th century, roughly coinciding with the breakdown of the unity provided by Sanskrit and the growth of regional languages and literature. Into its making went many elements, some drawn faithfully from the conventions of Sanskrit theatre, both in content and form, and others which were totally regional with tribal or ritualistic roots unique to Kerala. While scholars are correct in often calling Kutiyattam the only surviving tradition of Sanskrit theatre, it must be remembered that Kutiyattam has also unmistakable links with and elements from traditions which have little or nothing to do with the Sanskrit theatre.

.... There were several parallel developments in language and literature in Kerala by the time Kulasekhara wrote his plays. Original Malayalam poetry, its ballads and chants were in existence in the rich traditions of the Centamil literature which had flourished for many centuries. Co-existent were the establishment of several schools of Sanskrit learning and Hindu, Buddhist and Jain thought which reached Kerala early. Many schools and academies of Vedic, Buddhist and Jain thought grew up. By the 8th century Kerala seems to have assimilated Sanskrit so totally that literature of many disciplines was written in that language. This is borne out by the many works on grammar, linguistics, philosophy (including that of Sankara), astronomy, science, architecture, sculpture and music which were composed in Kerala between the 6th and 16th centuries, all in Malayalam script but in Sanskrit language. It is not surprising, therefore, that Kulasekhara, the author of the two Kutiyattam plays, should reflect the contemporary situation of Kerala which presented a picture of a unique blend of many strands, both social and cultural, some which had links with traditions outside Kerala and some which were wholly indigenous to the region.

Developments in the other arts, particularly those of architecture, sculpture, painting and music, are also relevant for understanding the growth of Kutiyattam. Although no early examples of architecture survive, even the late ones of theatre architecture exhibit identifiable links with architectural features of the theatre described in the *Natyasastra*.

.... The Kuttambalam, the traditional theatre of Kutiyattam, has the same affinities with the larger Indian or Sanskrit tradition on the one hand and a distinctive, almost unique, regional character on the other.

.... In course of time, about the 12th century,

the practice of Kutiyattam led to the writing of the manuals and texts which gave theoretical sanction and laid down rules and procedures of performance. The most important of these manuals being the *Attaprakaram* written in Manipravala, and the *Kramadipika*. The first details the techniques of acting and elaborates on the meanings of the form of a sustained story, in order to assist the actor in enacting through gestures and movements the content of the play. The second lays down the rules, regulations and procedures for staging these plays and the treatment of the songs, dances, *ragas*, and the rest.

.... Kutiyattam is the evolved dramatic form where both men and women take part. Since Kulasekhara wrote his plays the repertoire has been greatly enlarged and today nearly a dozen Kutiyattam plays are known to Kerala. Some of these are adaptations (or recensions) of earlier Sanskrit plays, presented in Kutiyattam style, others are original plays written for a Kutiyattam performance.

*Subhadradhananjayam* and *Taptisamevaranam* are attributed to Kulasekhara. Others are *Ascaryacudamani* of Shaktibhadra; *Naganandam* of Harsa; *Pratijnayaugandharavanam*, *Svapnavasavadatta*, *Pratimanatakam*, *Balacharitam* and *Abhisekanatakam* of Bhasa; *Matsavilasam* and *Bhagavadajjukiyam* of King Mahendra Vikrama; and *Dutaghatotkacam* and *Kalyana Saugandhikam* of Nilakantha.

.... Kutiyattam performances nevertheless continued and survived through the guarded discipline of the Cakyar families who became the sole repositories of both the literary and theatrical traditions of this particular form of theatre. According to scholars, there were 18 Cakyar families who performed the Kutiyattam. Some years ago Kunjunni Raja listed six such families and today only three can be mentioned. Among the best known performers are Koyppa Rama Cakyar of Painkulam, Mani Madhava Cakyar of Potiyil and Ammannur Madhava Cakyar.

.... The surviving families of the Cakyars are the direct descendants of those whose works have come down to us and who are frequently referred to in other works of Malayalam literature during the last eight hundred years or more.

.... The secret of the survival of the Kutiyattam lies as much in the ability of the Cakyar community to safeguard and preserve traditions of an earlier epoch as in their ability to adapt to new situations, to respond to local and immediate concerns, and to be flexible enough to be able to give their presentation contemporary validity and significance. Had the Cakyars merely restricted themselves to the form which was given to them by Kulasekhara, there was every chance of the breakdown or the annihilation of the tradition. The innovative flexibility which was provided by the Tolan to the character of the *vidusaka* through the use of local dialect and the liberty of ridiculing the four sacrosanct *Purusarthas* must have given the form enough scope for renewal, re-interpretation and improvisation. The Kutiyattam

traditions today are thus not museum pieces of a distant past, but belong to contemporary India through their satire, social comment and concern with here and now.

... What about the theatrical presentation itself? What does it constitute, how does it move, and what are its chief tools of technique and implements of communication? The first and foremost is the physical space in which it is performed, the theatre called the Kuttambalam.

... There is valuable textual material on the construction of the Kuttambalam: most of this, however, belong to a period long after the 9th and 10th centuries. While it is not certain that these structures existed at the time of Kulasekhara, he certainly took the architectural style and floor pattern of the theatre into account while evolving the methodologies of the presentation of Kutiyattam.

... The texts as well as the actual archaeological survivals bear testimony to the fact that the Kuttambalam was part and parcel of the temple complex with a well-conceived plan and basic layout. It is found on the right side of the installed deity and the texts prescribe this placement. All the Kerala theatres (i.e., those that are near the temples) face the deity in the temple in a parallel axis.

... The auditorium and the stage area are clearly demarcated. The stage is normally a square or nearly a square on a raised platform. It is so constructed that it nearly always faces the deity and the actors perform facing the god. It is made of a hollow stone base, which is filled with earth and rubble and plastered with cow-dung. On each side is a pillar, painted and lacquered in bright red; these pillars support an inner roof over the stage.

... At the back of the stage is the wall of the *nepathya* or dressing room. Two narrow doors make for entrance and exit of actors, reminiscent of the descriptions in the *Natyasastra*. Between the two doors are placed the two copper drums or mizhavus, the basic accompaniment of Kutiyattam; they are placed in a cage-like wooden frame, called *pinjara*.

The *nepathya* or green room is a narrow rectangular room running parallel to the width of the stage usually lower than the stage level, occasionally at the same level as the auditorium floor. The stage pillars are different in shape, design and colouring than the auditorium pillars. Their distribution on the acting area helps the audience and enables the actor to establish particular 'locale' for the different scenes even within this limited space. The auditorium area is one flat level lower than the stage area, only sometimes raised on either side, stage right or left, possibly corresponding to the *mattavarni* of the *Natyasastra* over which there has been much controversy amongst Sanskrit scholars. The auditorium has rows of large pillars on either side, front and back and smaller ones on the outside and still smaller ones on the outer side. The pillars are made of wood or stone, or sometimes with a stone base and wooden pillar, all these end in an ornamental shaft or capital. The whole gives the effect of a concave hut like structure which is richly

adorned and proportionately laid out spatially inside, with multiple roofs, gables and reefs. Indeed, the outside of a Kuttambalam gives no impression of the inner design and structure of the stage or the auditorium.

Even this brief description of the Kuttambalam will make it clear that the Kutiyattam and other forms of drama were presented in a highly formalized constructed structure which took into account stage, green room and auditorium areas. The play itself is performed in this Kuttambalam and is in turn a highly evolved form of drama with many intricate preliminaries and preludes. A full performance takes many nights to perform. The preliminaries constitute an important part of the performance and are essential to other forms of dance and dance-drama in other parts of India.

The *Natyasastra* describes many preliminaries called the *Purvaranga* and Bharata devotes two chapters to it. The Kutiyattam performance today is a direct carry-over of this tradition, although in some details the two differ.

... The performance begins with the lighting of the bell-metal oil lamp, with two wicks facing the actor and one facing the audience. The eight auspicious offerings, called the *Astamangala*, consist of different grains, fruits, flowers, etc. and are also placed close by. The mizhavu drum is tuned and the Nambyar plays on it accompanied by cymbals and the song sung by the Nanyar (also known as Naniyar and Nangyar). The song invokes deities like Ganapati, Sarasvati and Siva. The invocation to Ganapati or Sarasvati and sometimes Siva are also common to preliminaries of other dance forms in almost all parts of India. These songs are either called *gosthi* or *Akkitta Kuttuka*.

The next sequence is the *Nambyarute Tamil* wherein the Nambyar presents a brief resume of the story to be enacted. This is often pure Malayalam with plenty of Sanskrit words. Next, the stage is cleaned by sprinkling with water; this is known as the *Arannutali*. The Nambyar leaves the drum after the Akkitta fetches sacred water from the green room, sprinkles it and recites the *mangalasloka*. This is followed by the *dhrupa* verses sung by the female musician, the Nangyar; these verses allude to the previous birth of the character who is going to appear on the stage. These correspond closely to the *dhrupa* songs alluded to in the *Natyasastra*. The *dhrupa* songs set the tone of the play and are sung in appropriate *ragas*.

Then enter two persons holding a curtain before the entrance of the main character can take place. The actor comes and stands behind the curtain to the accompaniment of the music of the mizhavu drums and other instruments. Later, he performs many steps and movements to the accompaniment of the singing Nanyar.

... The first day's performance ends with these movements or *kriyas*. The basic stance is a 'grand plie open position' or what may be identified with the *mandalasthan* of the *Natyasastra* and space is covered in rectangles. The *nritta* position of

Kathakali owes much to these movements originally evolved for Kutiyattam. These preliminaries constitute an important part of the performance of Kutiyattam.

... The next phase, i.e., of *nirvahana*, also a preliminary rite, is unique to the Kutiyattam. This begins on the second day. The character introduces himself by presenting his personal history prior to the 'time-span' which is the subject matter of the play proper. Since most characters and heroes belong to known myth and legend, the actor chooses freely the particular myth or legend associated with the character. The flashback technique is very dexterously utilised, either by narrating incidents backward one by one or forward, i.e., beginning with the birth or youth and moving to the time present. The first is known as *Anukrama* and the second as *Sanksepa*. The *nirvahana* is a clever device for both solo monoacting and character portraiture which sets the tenor of the actual dramatic performance. The Indian drama for the best part does not lay great emphasis on character development and growth; the Kutiyattam tradition provides a full scope for character delineation through the convention of the *nirvahana*. It is significant to note that the actor on the stage does not use any speech in this phase; the verses are recited by the Nanyar and follow the pantomime presented by the dancer/actor rather than preceding it. In this respect, the Kutiyattam adheres to some techniques of *abhinaya* described in the *Natyasastra*, particularly the conventions of *suchi* and *ankara* forms of *angikabhinaya*.

... The *vidusaka* of Kutiyattam thus belongs to a different category than the *vidushaka* of Sanskrit drama, where he does not depart from the text of the plays. Here he improvises, interpolates and has the freedom for wide deviations and departures. In this respect, the Kutiyattam heralds a totally new tradition in Indian theatre, a tradition which has continued and survived in practically all temple and street theatre forms. In stage technique, although *vidusaka* is master of the spoken word (i.e. *vacikabhinaya*), in contrast to the kinetic and pantomime technique of the *nirvahana* of other characters, he is a consummate artist who understands and re-interprets the Sanskrit verses and the gestures of the main character. He also gives discourses on or debates the basic tenets of philosophic schools and religious dogmas.

... The structure of a Kutiyattam performance can be broken up into neat sequence such as (i) the initial ritual or invocatory; (ii) purappadu and other preliminaries behind the curtain which contain the body, of *nrta* technique of the form; (iii) *nirvahana* of the character which is solo-acting with much *abhinaya* but little pure dancing; (iv) *nirvahana* of the *vidusaka*; (v) the presentation of the play where all actors chant or speak their lines and gesticulate; and (vi) the final benediction.

... The Kutiyattam manuals like many dance texts and commentaries found in Kerala elaborate and develop this tradition. The word-gesture relationship in the concepts of *vacika* and

*angikabhinaya* of the Sanskrit stage and *Natyasastra* is taken further here by exploring the possibilities not only of multiple meaning but also of the syllables and syntax of a sentence. Inter-questions and answers characterize the interpretative portions of the *angikabhinaya*; elaboration and ornamentation on the text are encouraged and permissible. This tradition perhaps culminated in that of the *coliyattam* and *manodharma* in Kathakali. However, the highly developed and stylized techniques of Kutiyattam remain a class by themselves and have never been excelled by any other dance or drama or theatrical forms in India.

Here then is an amalgam of spoken work, recited and sung by the Nambiyars and the Nanyar and chanted by the hero, *vidusaka* and other characters during the main body of the play; instrumental music which precedes, follows and accompanies movement which is abstract as in *purappadu* and other preliminaries; movement that is interpretative through a highly evolved language of hand gestures (*hastabhinaya*) and facial gestures (*mukhabhinaya*), as also the movement of the eyes (*netrabhinaya*) performed by actors who use costume and make-up through a symbolism of colour and design. The whole ultimately seeks to invoke the inner states of mind and being. All this is presented on a theatre specially built for the purpose where acting areas are clearly demarcated and lighting is subdued but clearly designed. In traditional terms, all the four types of *abhinaya* (enacting) are used to the fullest, independently and in conjunction with each other.

As has been mentioned above, the *vacikabhinaya* can be broken up into the following five divisions. First, there is the recitation of the Sanskrit and Prakrit passages through a method which is unique to Kutiyattam; this is a slow syllable by syllable recitation.

The second component of *vacikabhinaya* is the vocal music of the Nanyar who sings the invocatory verses. The benedictory verses fall into a second category and the manner of their recitation is quite different from the recitation techniques of the actors, the Cakyars.

Thirdly, there is the music of the Nambiyar the rendering of which has a distinct tonality.

Fourthly, there are the prose renderings of *vidusaka* which demand yet another mode and method of voice production and speech articulation.

Finally, there are the *slokas*, the verses of the play itself, constituting the fifth component of *vacikabhinaya*. Each *sloka* is set to a particular *raga* corresponding to particular situations, types, moods, or to particular animal or bird world, season of the year, time of day, etc. Nearly twenty such *ragas* are frequently used in the Kutiyattam repertoire.

The *angikabhinaya* of Kutiyattam, however, is the last word in the theatrical technique of the use of eyes and eyebrows, facial muscles, torso and hands. A full and elaborate vocabulary of movements is the essence of a Kutiyattam performance. Legendary stories have grown up around the consummate skill of the Kutiyattam actor and his ability to recreate



situations and episodes powerfully through facial gestures and hands. Here also, as in the case of *vacikabhinaya*, there is a multiplicity of idiom and communication methodology as listed below :

(i) There are the purely abstract movements without meaning, which are seen in the *cavittu kriya* and in the other preliminaries.

(ii) There are then the dance sequences which constitute a part of the *purappadu* and have occasionally an element of pantomime. The basic position is the open spread out *grand plie* or *mandalasthanam* of the lower limbs which is common to Kathakali and Kutiyattam. The *nritya* element is strong although not as elaborate as in Kathakali. Careful distinctions are made between different types of choreographical passages which occur in the *nritya kriya*. They are known by names like *ceriya cakkam*, or entrance movements, *colliyunti nata* for graceful sedate movements etc.

(iii) There is also an interpretative movement related to the word recited or sung and which is general in character and pertains to the whole body. This is known as the *Cakiyattam* (also *coliyattam* in Kathakali but different).

(iv) There is then the line-to-line, word-to-word and syllable-to-syllable interpretation through *hastabhinaya* and *netrabhinaya* (acting through the mediums of hands and eyes respectively), accompanied either with the recitation of the actor himself or with the song of the Nanyar. The *netrabhinaya*, particularly, is a highly intricate system of expression through the eyes.

(v) Since the Kutiyattam provides enough scope for improvisation and interpolation, there comes a stage when the recitative or sung word is used only as a take-off point for interpretative dancing which is highly contextual in character and requires a vast knowledge and deep understanding of the 'allusions'. The form, thus, is full of interpretative and pantomimic movements, and the greatness of an actor lies in his capacity for multiple interpretation of the word.

(vi) The face and its muscles constitute another subgroup which is of the utmost importance in Kutiyattam. Techniques of expressing emotion through a controlled use of facial muscles have evolved in Kutiyattam to a degree unparalleled anywhere else. The Kathakali uses some of these techniques, but those of the Kutiyattam are more complex.

(vii) The micro-movements of the eyes (the *netrabhinaya*), through which the Kutiyattam actors often express complex situations or emotions, are a class by themselves.

The techniques of costuming and make-up used in the *aharyabhinaya* reinforce this vision of presenting character and emotion impersonally and through a distinctive stylization. Although the *vidusaka* is real and contemporary, he too is not overportrayed realistically. A basic design is followed by characters with regard to the costuming which has some affinities with Kathakali but is quite

distinct. No large oversize impression is created; in the Kutiyattam the costumes are designed to be viewed frontally.

The make-up of Kutiyattam resembles that of Kathakali, but is somewhat simpler, although the basic colour symbolism is identical. The different types of make-up are the Pazhuppa of slightly reddish colour used for heroes, kings, and *dhirodatta* characters; the princes like Arjuna, Mitravasu and Rama use *pacce* (green-syam); the aborigines, *asuras*, and Surpanakha use the *kari* (black); and characters like Ravana use the *katti* (literally, knife, i.e., basic red colour) with a pith-ball on the top of the nose as in Kathakali. The manner of applying the *cutti* (or lining with rice flour paste) is not markedly different from Kathakali. The ingredients used are identical and comprise turmeric powder, red arsenic, vermilion (*caliyam*), charcoal powder, Indian blue, rice powder (*abhra*), red Techchii flowers, Nonnana grass, bamboo sticks, oork and the outer covering of the arecanut, palm, etc. These indigenous items are also used in the make-up of characters of other forms, but in India Kutiyattam, Kathakali and Yaksagana have the most highly elaborate and stylized techniques of make-up and headgears.

With its external as well as internal elements, the Kutiyattam is at once a highly symbolic, abstract and self-conceived design (which some scholars have compared to a Vedic ritual) on the one hand and a very concrete form allowing for specificity, particularity and contemporaneity on the other. We observe also that while it has close connections with temple-ritual and court drama, it is not an exclusive art meant only for the select elite. It seeks to establish, and does establish, communication with the people, with both the initiated and the uninitiated. In this respect, it is typical of the Indian theatre arts, which are seldom, if ever, restricted to a particular class or caste of audience even though the actors or performers may represent a particular community or caste. The Kutiyattam incorporates into its acting styles many elements, some indigenous to Kerala, others (like the *angikabhinaya*), derived from the Sanskrit tradition. The same amalgam is noticed in the use of language which ranges from Sanskrit to Manipravala to colloquial Malayalam.

While some of its conventions (like aspects of the *Purvaranga*) belong to the Sanskrit tradition, others like the *nirvahana* are its own distinctive features. It shares with the rest of Indian theatre many features and stock conventions of the hero types, the Ganesa *vandana*, the *vidusaka*, etc.

Its presentation style borrows elements from all the arts and rests heavily on the literary word, the architectural design of the theatre, the sculptural motif, the painting motifs seen in mural painting, and the musical modes. Thus, it is a total theatre where all genres of the word (spoken or written), movement (macro and micro, abstract or interpretative), costume, make-up and design are woven together to constitute one integrated whole.

24 March 1995

## KUTTIYATTAM

### UDYANA PRAVESAM

from *Ashokavanikankam*, *Ascharyachudamani*  
(Act V) of Shaktibhadra

**Author :** Shaktibhadra was a poet who is believed to have lived in Kerala in the late 9th or early 10th century. He seems to have been slightly earlier than the dramatist Kulasekharavarman. In the prologue of *Ascharyachudamani*, there is a mention that Shaktibhadra was a south Indian poet, and the author of another poem, *Unmadavasavadatta*.

**Text :** *Ascharyachudamani* is one of the most important plays in the repertoire of Kutiyattam today, and has retained its popularity through the many centuries of the existence of this theatric form. Divided into seven acts, the elaborate staging of each act of the play seems to have had considerable influence on the composition and stage techniques of other plays in the same category. Its popularity on the Kerala stage is evident from the fact that *Natankusa*, a critical work belonging to the 15th century, quotes at length from the text and directs its criticism of Kutiyattam by citing several instances of the stage acting of *Anguliyanka*, an act from the text. The plot of *Ascharyachudamani* covers the story of Ramayana from the arrival of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana in Panchavati to Rama's victory over Ravana and his subsequent return to Ayodhya.

**Plot :** The scene depicts Ravana's passion for Sita whom he had abducted and taken captive in the Asoka grove. On a moonlit night, Ravana, decked in regal finery approaches Sita (represented on the stage by a lighted lamp) and implores her to accept him, but Sita angrily spurns his advances. Frustrated and angry, Ravana draws his sword to kill Sita but Mandodari, his wife, appears on the scene, catches hold of his sword and averts the tragedy.

**Text of performance :** Ravana feels an uncontrollable passion for Sita. Dressed in regal finery and accompanied by his retinue, he proceeds to Asoka-Vanika (The Asoka Grove) to woo Sita.

Ravana : How does Sita, the daughter of king Janaka, appear at this time?

He elaborately depicts the *kesadipada* (head-to-foot description) of Sita. The description concentrates on Sita's curly hair falling over her forehead, her eyebrows, eyes, nose, cheeks, ears, lips, face, neck, chest, breasts, hands, belly, line of hair on the belly, three creases on the belly, navel, waist, garment, thighs, calves, feet, nails and the inner surface of the feet. (Torn by the arrows of Kama, burnt by the rays of the moon, his feeling of love accentuated by a soft breeze, he swoons, and regains consciousness.)

Ravana : Varshavara, lead me to Asoka-Vanika. I am not ordering you, but requesting you. What does

Varshavara say? [Listens] "As your Majesty commands – this way, this way." [Mandodari and Chedi appear].

Mandodari : My maid, what did you say? Did you tell me that my husband, dressed in royal finery, went to Asoka-Vanika to see Sita? Maid, come, unseen by my husband, we will hide behind the creepers in the garden. We will observe his erotic excesses towards Sita, who does not reciprocate his feelings. Come, let us have some amusement.

Chedi : As the Queen orders. My friend, let us go to Asoka-Vanika. This way please – this way.

Ravana : This garden is enchanting, indeed. I have not seen another garden like this. Beautiful!

Varshavara, Sita is sitting under the Simsapa tree, isn't she? [Listens to his reply : "Yes, my Lord, Sita is sitting under the Simsapa tree".] Sita casts scornful glances at me. When I try to woo her with sweet words, she closes her ears. When I stand before her with folded hands, she addresses Rama and weeps. I don't know how to please her and get a favourable response from her.

I stand near her, dressed attractively, and cast loving looks on her, with all my twenty eyes. I would feel happy only if she glanced in my direction at least once; but instead, she looks at me with scorn. I go near her and tell her: "Look, Sita, you need not sit here brooding; you take a bath, eat food, put on lovely dresses. Oh, beautiful woman, don't you hear my words?" But all these sweet words are lost on her; she closes her ears with the palms, unable to bear my words.

I stand before Sita, joining the palms of my twenty hands, requesting her to have some mercy on me. Disregarding my words, Sita addresses Rama thus: "Oh, Aryaputra, please come at once and rescue this helpless wife of yours from her sad predicament. I have no other refuge but you. Please come at once and save me".

Every day I thus come and stand before Sita and repeat these supplications; but all this has been futile. I do not know what else I should do. I know how to please ordinary women. But I don't know how to win the favour of this woman.

Mandodari : My maid, there stands His Majesty. We shall now see what he has in mind. [Ravana places rich presents before Sita. Overcome by lust, he cuts arecanut and places it before Sita on betel-leaves smeared with lime.]

Ravana : Lovely one, take your bath in the water of Ganga; put on the celestial robes and ornaments offered by the trees there; enjoy the luxuries of heaven on Mount Kailasa or in the gardens of heaven – luxuries which cannot be won even by the hardest *tapas*. (All this can be yours.) But alas! your chastity bars the path to heaven.

Sita\* : Fie upon your path to heaven! I have vowed devotion to my husband and to fulfill that vow I would rather enter hell.

\* Sita's lines are recited by the Nangiar sitting on the side of the stage.

Ravana : My lady, for your sake I will abandon my entire harem.

Mandodari : Let His Majesty remember these words!

Sita : No, not only your harem; for my sake you will have to give up your very life.

Mandodari : Ah, human beings speak very harshly indeed.

Ravana : True, the God of Love is taking away my life.

Sita : No, my husband who is far more beautiful than the God of Love.

Ravana : Ha, ha, ha! It is not reasonable to say that the weapon of grass wielded by your husband – the degraded Kshatriya wandering in the forest – cannot be borne in the field of battle by Ravana who bore on his chest the mighty weapon of Indra as though it were a tender leaf – the weapon with which Indra chopped off the wings of mountains.

Mandodari : Why does His Majesty make all this effort ? Sita cannot be won by any such means.

Ravana : My lady, I make this supplication with folded hands. My entire harem composed of Gandharva, Asura, Sura, Yaksha and Naga women will wait upon you as servants. Will you not show me some favour ?

Mandodari : I will do even this for her! I do not know of another who would do this.

Chedi : Oh, Queen, look! With his palms all brought together in supplication, the king looks like an ocean with slightly open lotuses.

Mandodari : I hope that the king will not become angry with this chaste woman because his desire is frustrated.

Ravana : My lady, this is my humble supplication, my most humble entreaty.

Sita : Alas!

Mandodari : A resolute woman is she! She draws her feet away from the head of His Majesty as she would from dirt. The rumour that Sita is the daughter of Mother Earth and Rama is Vishnu is now proved to be true.

Ravana : My lady, your feet are my only refuge.

Sita : Go and seek my husband's feet as refuge.

Ravana : What! Your seagirt Mother, Earth, is a common woman shared by all kings who enjoy a tribute of one-sixth given to them by their various subject peoples. Then what is the meaning of this chaste conduct of yours? [He asks] Where is my sword?

Mandodari : Alas! Has it come to this? She is a chaste wife. With my life I will save her from the danger from my king. Victory to your Majesty!

Ravana : What! My queen Mandodari, daughter of Maya!

Mandodari : Your Majesty, even Rama, her husband, is not the target of your sword any more than that this woman is your prisoner. If you ignore her, she will herself give up her life.

Ravana : What you say is correct.

[Off-stage]

Hail our Master! Hail His Majesty! Hail, Lord of Lanka! Hail our blessed Lord! Hail Lord of auspicious face! Ten 'Nadikas' have elapsed. The time for bathing is almost past. This way, Your Majesty.

Ravana : You have now become an impediment. Well, I shall see about this tomorrow morning.

[Ravana, Mandodari and Chedi exit]

*Cast*

Ravana : Guru Ammannur Madhava Chakyar

Mandodari : Usha Nangiar

Chedi : Kapila

Recitation of the text of Sita : Nirmala Paniker

*Accompanists*

Mizhavu : P.K. Narayanan Nambiar, C.K. Krishnan Nambiar, V.K. Hariharan, P.P. Rajeev

Edakka : Kalanilayam Unnikrishnan

Kurumkuzhal : Sudhir Shankar

*Troupe*

Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam, Irinjalakuda

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25 March 1995

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## NANGIAR KUTTU SRIKRISHNALEELA

*Text* : Originating as an offshoot of Kutiyattam, Nangiar Kuttu rightly claims to have an independent existence. Presented by Nangiar or female performers

the text of Nangiar Kuttu can be considered as a digression from the Second Act of Kulasekhara's *Subhadradhananjayam*. It is performed by Kalpalatika, the maid of Subhadra, who presents the story of Krishna in the form of Nirvahana. The text for Nangiar Kuttu is *Srikrishna Charitam*, with a corpus of 217 *slokas*. It covers the story of the 'Dasamaskandha' of Bhagavata from the life of King Ugrasena up to the romantic affair between Arjuna and Subhadra, ending with the episode of Alambasura's kidnapping of Subhadra.

*Plot of Srikrishnaleela* : In the form of Nirvahana, the scene details the childhood of Srikrishna and Balarama. It describes elaborately the playful pranks of the brothers, first as toddlers, then as children in the company of friends in the forest. When the friends are duped by Krishna, they report to Yasoda that Krishna ate mud, and an irate Yasoda reprimands him. Krishna shows his Universal Form (Visvarupa) to his mother.

*Text of performance* : Ritual entry – obeisance to the Mizhavu, survey of the audience (Sabhanireekshanam), salutations to the audience in the 'Kamalaparivartana' mode (unfolding of the



lotus).

*Recapitulation in brief*, Samkshepam : So then, long ago, Lord Narayana, to rid the earth of surfeit of evil, took birth as the son of Vasudeva, killed the evil demoness Pootana and the demon Sakatasura who were deputed to kill him. And one day, at the request of Vasudeva, Sage Garga came to Nanda's house and performed the Namakaranam of Krishna and his brother Balarama. And Krishna and Balarama grew up happily.

*The episode* : At that time, Krishna and Balarama were infants crawling on all fours and they frolicked about on their knees and elbows. When they did so, their ankle-bells and bells in their waist chains jingled and hearing these sounds they moved about faster – they wandered about in the cattleshed and soiled their young bodies with cowdung and ashes. If they noticed someone approaching, they accosted him gladly; but if he was a stranger, they rushed off in fear to their mothers.

Yasoda could not control or reprimand them due to her overflowing affection and joy.

*Kareeshabhasma dhigdhangau  
Bhramamanavitastatha  
Na nivarayitum sehe  
Yasodha tau kumarakau*

So they grew up, radiant as the sun and the moon. When they crossed five years, full of health, their bodies soiled by the dust of play, they frolicked about like two young elephants bouncing with vitality – they pulled at the tails of young calves and the horns of cows and in turn were pulled about by the calves – they scared the cowherd women by trying to catch hold of snakes and when dissuaded by the women, smilingly withdraw. So, the women, neglecting all their tasks, watched the children's pranks in joy and awe.

*Panchasamvatsaram praptau  
Balachandrarka varchasu  
Rejatuh pamsudhigdhangau  
Deeptaucha kalabhaviva.*

One day, Krishna and Balarama went to a forest with their friends, plucked wild fruits and berries and sat down to eat them. Then Krishna told them : "If you will close your eyes, I will divide these fruits equally among you." So, all the boys sat with eyes closed and hands outstretched. But, Krishna duped them all and ate the fruits himself. When they opened their eyes, there was no fruit left. Angered, they exclaimed : "Krishna, where are the fruits? Did you eat them all, deceiving us? We will go to your mother and complain to her." So they went to Yasoda and told her that her son Krishna had eaten mud. Yasoda asked Krishna in anger : "Did you eat mud?" "No Mother, these boys are making false complaints about me," said Krishna. "No", said Yasoda, "it is you who are lying; not these boys." "No mother, I am telling the truth," said Krishna. "Alright, open your mouth, let me see," said Yasoda. And, looking into his mouth, she was astounded to see all the

diverse worlds there. "Am I dreaming," she wondered. "No, I am fully awake. Only I am the same Yasoda. And this is my son Krishna." She realised that her son was Lord Narayana himself. And her maternal instincts were rekindled. She took her son in her arms and embraced him in ecstasy.

*Kalae tesmin kadhachil kila phalanikara  
steyasamjatharaushair –  
Balairbalastvadheeyo mridasanakriditi  
Vyahrutham sa Yasodha  
Rushta raktanthanethra vadanavidalanee  
Prerayandhyasvarendrae  
Drshtva lokanaseshan nijamapi  
Tanayam sasmitham vismitabhui*

Concludes : So, in fun and frolic, Krishna lived happily in Gokulam.

*Cast*

Nangiar : Margi Sathi

*Accompanists*

Mizhavu : Kalamandalam Unnikrishnan Nambiar,  
Kalamandalam Ramanunni, Kalamandalam Achuthanandan,  
Kalamandalam Mohanan

Edakka : Subramonian Potti, Margi Venugopal

Talam : Margi Usha

*Make-up & costumes*

Margi Somadas, Margi Raveendran

*Troupe*

Margi, Trivandrum

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25 March 1995

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## KUTTIYATTAM SUBHADRADHANANJAYA

from *Subhadradhananjaya* (Act I) of Kulasekhara Varman

*Author* : Kulasekhara Varman, the author of two plays, *Subhadradhananjaya* and *Tapatisamvarana*, seems to have ruled from 978 to 1036 A.D. He also wrote *Vyangyavyakhya*, a critique, after seeing the stage production of his plays. Apart from this, he, along with his friend Tolan, remodelled Kutiyattam to its existing form.

*Text* : Among the plays from Kerala which have been adapted to Kutiyattam, Kulasekhara Varman's *Subhadradhananjaya* and *Tapatisamvarana* occupy an important position. *Subhadradhananjaya* is a five-act play which deals with the love between Arjuna and Subhadra. The play begins with Arjuna's arrival in Dwarka after an extended pilgrimage, proceeds through several stages in the complication of the plot and ends with the happy union of the lovers. An interesting innovation in the story is Krishna's gift of a Gatrika (breastwear) to Subhadra in which ten names of Arjuna have been embroidered into. The stock character of *viduraka* appears as a friend and confidant of the hero. A choreography text called

Vyangyayakhya has also been recovered for the play. Historically *Subhadradhananjayam* marks an important turning point in the development of Kutiyattam.

**Plot :** Arjuna, while returning from pilgrimage, sees a woman being abducted and carried away through the skies by a demon called Alambusa. He challenges the demon and brandishes 'Agnayastra'. The frightened demon frees the maiden, who falls down and is caught by Arjuna in his arms. The maiden is in a state of extreme fear, mingled with gratitude for her saviour. The couple, not knowing each other's identity, are attracted towards each other.

**Text of performance :** After sounding of the Mizhavu and holding of the curtain and on removal of the curtain enter Dhananjaya and Kanyaka (maiden). The Kanyaka enacts the 'Panchanga' of Dhananjaya (description of the five parts of the physique viz. head, face, chest, etc.) She recites (in Prakrit) :

*Konuva eso mahanubhavo thellokkadhullaha  
roopathisayo mam anukampethi*

"Who is this great person who rescued me from the hands of the demon – I have not seen any other person as handsome as him. Further, he, with all his virtues, is so compassionate towards me; who may this person be?" Recites lines again.

Dhananjaya : "How is she, whom I rescued from the demon?" He then enacts the 'Panchanga' (description of the five parts of the physique) of the maiden, i.e., hair, face, eyebrows. Stops when about to describe the eyes, which is done in great detail through the famous sequence known as 'Chalakuvalayam'.

Recites sloka :

*Chalakuvalaya dhamnoranjanasnigdhamakshnor  
Bhaya chala dhritiyugmam keyamalolayanti  
Mukha parimalalobhat bhrnga dattanuyatra  
Sithilayati Subhadramudritam manasam me*

"Her eyes have the lustre of a trembling blue lotus. Due to fear, her eyes are agitated. Her eyes, resplendent by the application of collyrium, are fluttering. The fragrance of her face attracts the bees to accompany her. Now, who is she, who loosens the knot of my heart, which has been tied tightly and sealed by Subhadra?"

The above sloka is enacted in detail, splitting it into sections as below. (*Anvayichadal*)

*Iyam ka :* Who is she? Who is her father? Who is her mother? Which is her family? What is her name? What sets me thinking this way?

*Me manasam sithilayati :* She unties the knot and breaks the seal which has closed my heart. How is my heart ?

*Subhadramudritam :* Tied and sealed by Subhadra. How? He describes how Subhadra entered his heart through his ears when he heard the words of Gada of Dwaraka, praising the virtues and physical charms of Subhadra. The actor presents this by enacting the role of Subhadra, by taking the female stance of

Subhadra and enacting : 'No one else should enter his heart. So I will tightly tie his heart by my physical charm, etc., and seal it.' The actor then returns to the original stance of Dhananjaya and enacts: 'Such a heart, tied and sealed by Subhadra, has been opened by this girl who entered my heart through my eyes.'

He then contemplates : 'Well, how is she?'

*Akshnor yugmam alolayanti :* Both her eyes are fluttering. He then ponders : 'How are those eyes of hers?'

*Chalakuvalaya dhamna :* Her eyes have the lustre of a trembling blue lotus. He then muses : 'Is that all about her eyes?'

*Bhaya chala dhriti :* Agitated due to fear. He muses again : 'Anything more about her eyes?'

*Anjana snigdham :* Resplendent by the application of collyrium. How is that? He muses and enacts. He describes this in great detail by gestures. He takes the stance of the beautiful girl he saved.

She tells the Sakhis (maids) : "Sakhis! Please adorn me."

Then he takes the stance of the different sakhis, who make a detailed survey of her body from head to feet. Then they hold her hand and bring her forward and start adorning her.

One of them unties her long tresses of hair, parts them, combs them, decorates with flowers after making a garland of flowers, applies perfumed oil on the hair, adjusts the curls on the forehead, applies vermilion on the Simanta Rekha, tilak on the forehead, studs on the ear, necklace, bangles, rings, sandalpaste around the breasts, waist cloth etc., flower juice and anklets on the feet etc. This is done by various sakhis in turn. In between, each Sakhi takes a close look from head to feet. She notices that the face lacks glamour. 'Why?' She wonders and asks another to take a look and find the reason. Then, she suddenly discovers that she did not apply collyrium on the eyes. She blushes at this omission and apologetically applies collyrium and as a result finds the face absolutely resplendent.

'Such are her eyes.' The actor then returns to the stance of Dhananjaya and muses : 'What more?'

*Mukha parimala lobhat bhrnga dattanuyatra :* He enacts the role of the bees and shows them following her face; attracted by the fragrance.

He then says : 'Such a girl is not human.' He then repeats the latter part of the sloka and ends his *abhinaya*.

Kanyaka recites (in Prakrit) :

*Ahovichamaseyidavahvahasajam  
Bhoothayaravimadukatharam  
Annagayanarayan cha  
Imam pi janam udeesiya vahuranto  
Vunathanam arovedyam aadatha*

Enacts : (With a deep sigh) 'Look at Kama's temerity – I am still dazed by the attack of the demon; on top of it, he had made me desire another person (i.e.

other than Dhananjaya to whom she is already attracted) and thus made me feel like a woman of loose morals.'

Dhananjaya enacts the 'Kesadipada' (description of the parts of the physique) of the Kanyaka, head, eyes, face and stops at the breasts.

Recites the following sloka :

*Kliptashoumou prakambadhurasija  
kalasavuchvasal partha bhangau  
Milaneelambujasreeranthimukhalintham mughda  
pada kadaksha  
Rohadromanchabhajasramajalakanikabhyudgatirganda  
seemnorrbheethyam kim va kriyatyamapi  
Madana dasaya manushya pravesat*

Enacts the meaning : "Due to trembling with fear and movements of the breasts, her bodice has got loose – the decoration with paste stands erased. Her eyes, resembling a closed blue lotus, are extremely sweet. Due to horripilation, her cheeks are decked with minute sweat droplets. Are all these due to fear or heat of amour?"

Then Dhananjaya completes the enactment of *kesadipada* from the breasts downwards. Enacts being smitten by the arrows of Kama and swoons.

When he recovers from the trance, enters Vidusaka. Enactment of the highly mirth-provoking 'Vidusaka stobha' (clown's antics). Then verbal delivery in *Malayalam* by the Vidusaka, a sample translation in English as below : "My mate (Dhananjaya) got the maiden. I was the one who worked for it. When I was wondering in search for him, suffering the pangs of hunger and thirst and while searching for some water to quench my thirst, I saw a maiden being carried away thro' the sky by a demon. It was I who pointed out this to my mate. Ofcourse, he used the 'Agneyastra' to recover the maiden from the demon."

#### Cast

Dhananjaya : Margi Madhu

Kanyaka : Margi Sathi

Vidusaka : Kochukuttan Chakyar

#### Accompanists

Mizhavu : Kalamandalam Unnikrishnan Nambiar

Kalamandalam Ramanunni, Kalamandalam Achuthanandan

Edakka : Margi Subramonian Potti, Margi Venugopal

Tala : Margi Somadas, Margi Raveendran

#### Troupe

Margi, Trivandrum

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26 March 1995

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#### NANGIAR KUTTU

#### PUTANA MOKSHAM

*Text* : From *Srikrishna Charitam Nangiar Kuttu* (see note for *Srikrishnaleela*)

*Plot* : The demoness Putana, at the orders of king Kamsa, approaches Ambadi to kill Krishna. She

disguises herself as Lalita, describes the attractive sights at Ambadi and reaches the abode of Krishna. Though enchanted by the extraordinary beauty of the infant Krishna, she decides to carry out her mission and feeds the child with milk, from her poisoned breast. Along with breastmilk, Krishna sucks out the vitals of Putana, and she dies, thereby attaining Moksha.

*Text of performance* : Putana looks at her body and shows the characteristics of a demon. She thinks : 'If I go in this form people will be afraid of me and they will go away from me. Hence I shall take the form of a beautiful lady.' She disguises herself as a lovely lady and with satisfaction she moves towards Ambadi. While nearing Ambadi she sees many attractive scenes on the way. The womenfolk (the Gopis) are engaged in various activities. They milk the cows, feed the children with milk, churn curd. She sees many other similar scenes in Ambadi.

In one of the houses, Putana sees a child sleeping after being bathed and fed by his mother. Putana slowly enters the house and before stepping into it she applies poison on her own breasts. She goes into the house, takes the child pretending all love, and begins feeding the child by her poisoned breast. Later, hiding herself in another park of the house she watches and finds that the child is dead. The parents cry sorrowfully and Putana feels happy over the result. Then she moves to another house and lastly she reaches the residence of Yasoda. When she is about to enter the house she sees some bad omens and that irk her. Yet she steps into the house.

There she sees the child Krishna sleeping peacefully after being bathed and fed by Yasoda. Putana is very excited to see the beautiful child. Her mind is filled with love and affection. Putana describes the beautiful form of the child Krishna.

Then she decides to take the child and tries to do so. First she feels that the child is unusually heavy. The second time she doesn't feel so, and takes the child. She kisses and showers affection on the child. She hesitates to do harm to such a beautiful child and thinks for a moment to withdraw herself from the attempt. But she immediately remembers the order of Kamsa and half-heartedly decides to execute the order. If she did not carry out the orders of Kamsa, she herself would be killed: 'Before I am killed by Kamsa, let me destroy this child,' decides Putana. Putana approaches the child, takes him in her arms and tries to feed the poisoned breast. Here Putana acts as the lady who feeds and then as the child Krishna himself who sucks the breasts by beating and torturing Putana. Srikrishna sucks not only the breastmilk but the life out of Putana and the demoness dies suffering. She is given deliverance by Lord Krishna.

#### Cast

Nangiar : Kalamandalam Shylaja

#### Accompanists

Kalamandalam P.V. Iswaran Unni, Kalamandalam

A.N. Hariharan

26 March 1995

## KUTTIYATTAM SURPANAKHANKAM

20

from *Ascharyachudamani* (Act II) of Shaktibhadra

Author & Text : See notes for Udyana Pravesam.

Plot : *Surpanakhankam*, the Second Act of *Ascharyachudamani*, deals with the life of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana in Panchavati and the episode of the disfigurement of the demoness Surpanakha at the hands of Lakshmana. Surpanakha, torn by pangs of love for Rama, approaches him in the guise of a lovely damsel and requests him to accept her. Rama expresses his unwillingness to do so and sends her to Lakshmana. Spurned by Lakshmana, she returns to Rama, only to be sent back to him again. When rejected once more, Surpanakha reveals her real nature as a demoness and Lakshmana disfigures her by cutting off her ears, nose and breasts. Blood-stained and furious, Surpanakha leaves, to report the matter to Khara and Dushana.

Text of performance : Sounding the Mizhavu followed by *goshti* drumming the curtain is held up : Enter Srirama and Sita. 'Aha! I am now very happy. How is that? When I went to the hermitage of Sage Agastya, I promised to all the sages who came there that all the demons will be killed. After accepting the weapons given by Sage Agastya who was pleased, I made friends with Jatayu on the way to Panchavati. I reached Panchavati with Sita and Lakshmana. The sages had already told this that his Panchavati is full of cruel demons and wild beasts. None of them are now to be seen here. Let me tell Sita about this : *vaidehi vaidehi vidhure saivam vismayaniyataya stuyate! pasya*

[Sita, all objects in the distances listen with amazement.]

Sloka :

*Saitayamibhirambuvaha*

*nivahaccharyaisriyamacharaih*

*Sevya panchavatiti me matrirabhududvela*  
*kautuhala*

*Seyam devi cirocitamupanayatyudyanyogyam*  
*sriyam*

*Srotur vismayaniya vastuvissayassailatavisagarah*

"[Hearing that Panchavati was inhabited by demons as tall as mountains and having the colour of clouds, my mind has been filled with wonder. Devi, that Panchavati is now, due to familiarity, like a garden. People who live at a distance are filled with surprise when they hear about mountains, forests or seas.]"

Sita : My Lord, I feel eager to astound the

womenfolk in the palace by talking to them again and again about the wonders of the forest.

[Srirama and Sita withdraw into the *nepathya*]

[Surpanakha in disguise as Lalita]

[Lalita enters. She enacts being attracted to Srirama, describes Srirama's *panchanga* (five parts of the body): Matted hair, eyes, face, chest and feet), is overcome by passion, faints, wakes up and leaves the stage.]

[Srirama and Sita enter. Lalita (Surpanakha) goes to them, salutes Srirama] :

May my lord prosper !

Srirama : O beautiful lady, have you met Lakshmana?

Lalita (Surpanakha) : Yes, I saw him.

Srirama : Has he listened to my words.

Surpanakha : Just listened only.

Srirama : What answer did he give?

Surpanakha : You have become a hindrance to me in looking after my lord performing the duties of a hermit.

Srirama : [smiles to himself] He will have said exactly this. [Aloud] I advise you, my lady, to make one more attempt.

Surpanakha : My lord should not speak like that. I shall stay here worshipping your feet.

Sita : This humble one is good, out of love for my lord.

Srirama : [Looking at Surpanakha] Lady, I respect your opinion just expressed. But it was out of regard for my father's desire that in the presence of sage Vasishtha and with the holy fire as witness that I married this one. Even she is an obstacle to my situation. This is my situation. Now you may decide as you please.

Surpanakha : If that is to, I shall sacrifice my life here. I don't have the strength to go anywhere else.

Sita : My Lord, it is not proper to reject her appeal.

Srirama : I request you, my lady, to go to Lakshmana once again.

Surpanakha : Alas! By listening to my lord's words, I violated the moral code of women.

Srirama : Lady, that is not correct. Don't think that courtship is not proper for ladies according to Sanatana *dharma*. Ganga dwells on the matted hair of Shiva; and yet doesn't she go to join the sea, the husband of rivers?

Surpanakha : [To herself] All right. If he rejects me unkindly this time also, I'll show them my colours.

[After enacting entry and the characteristics of a demoness, exit]

[Srirama and Sita enter and listen to off-stage voice]

Offstage : [from the *nepathya*] Stop, you demoness!

Srirama : [listening] It seems to be the voice of Lakshmana

Sita : Yes, it is his voice.

[Srirama and Sita exit]

[Enter Surpanakha and Lakshmana. They together enact the entry]

Lakshmana : Stop, demoness, stop!

[When Surpanakha is about to grab Lakshmana the latter rushes back to the *nepathya*, followed by Surpanakha]

[Enter Srirama and Sita]

Srirama : [listening and seeing] What is this, Lakshmana? Ferocious canine teeth, copper-coloured hair, a mountainous figure, cloud colour. It causes fear in me, who has killed Tataka.

Sita : My lord, stop the demoness, stop her.

Srirama : Devi, no need to fear. Haven't you seen before the figure of the demoness on the wall?

[Srirama and Sita exit]

[Surpanakha enters]

Surpanakha : I, who am fed up with eating the flesh of hermits, have just got soft and sweet food. Having eaten up these ones, I shall make a gift of her to Ravan. [Leaves]

[Enters Lakshmana]

Lakshmana : Here is she rushing towards me. She waves her hands long enough to touch the clouds and turn around so as to make the earth's surface undulating.

She is rushing towards us with her mouth like the gate of an open fort.

[Enter Srirama and Sita]

Srirama : Here, she leaps into the sky. Again she is on the earth making twists and turns running and jumping about and straightening herself. With the tips of her nails sharp like swords she tears the clouds to pieces.

Sita : My lord, stop the demoness, stop her.

Srirama : Devi, don't be afraid, don't be afraid, O! fair one, this is only a machine whose inside is hollow. Not a demoness. If my weapon touches her, she will at once fall to the ground and start walking.

Lakshmana : Brother, be pleased, I shall stop her myself. [He intervenes]

Surpanakha : Alas, alas! These humans which are my food are attacking me!

Lakshmana : I will slice you up into bits for birds to eat.

Surpanakha : Let me first devour this cruel-hearted one.

Srirama : Stop, stop! We are not hermits to forgive your atrocities. Give up your present attempt. You demoness, our arrows are least merciful to demons.

[Surpanakha grabs Lakshmana]

Lakshmana : Here, because of a small blunder, I have fallen into her grip.

Surpanakha: Mountain peaks are lighter compared to

him. [Surpanakha goes up into the sky carrying Lakshmana.]

[Enter Srirama and Sita]

Srirama : Devi, give up your fear; gather courage and leave me. The demoness is carrying Lakshmana into the sky.

Sita : Who is there to protect me, lord?

Srirama : Who will protect Lakshmana?

Sita : Hasn't he got a weapon in his hands?

Srirama : For one who is in the grip of the demoness, what use is his weapon? [Sits down upset] Even as I look on, the demoness has taken hold of Lakshmana and disappeared into the sky. [He enacts getting ready for a fight, strings his bow, picks up from the quiver an arrow] What holy weapon has to be used against her !

Offstage : [from the *nepathya*] Oh! I have been thrown to the ground. Help me, O! Lord, help me !

Srirama : [after enacting listening to the offstage voice] This is a female voice I hear. What is the reason for this earthquake? Lakshmana has brought the demoness to the ground ?

Sita : I too guess the same.

Srirama : Devi, hold on to my hand and come with me. Let me look for Lakshmana.

Sita : I'll try. Both walk about in a stylized manner. [chellunti natakkuka]

Srirama : What is this ? Is it water rushing oozing the mineral reserves of the mountains, flowing from the rivers into the forest? Is it the clouds of the deluge making an offering of blood red as the rising sun?

[Then enters Lakshmana. He enters standing on the *piṭha*. He is coming down from the sky to the earth]

Lakshmana : Alas ! I violate myself by using a weapon for the first time against a woman. Or perhaps, there is nothing to regret in this. Seeing the enmity of the demoness and my brother's determination, I cut off her nose and ears with great difficulty. Let me now go to my brother.

[Lakshmana withdraws into the *nepathya*. When Srirama and Sita enter the stage, Lakshmana goes to them]

Lakshmana : May you prosper, my Lord.

Srirama : [embracing him with pleasure] O, my mind! be comforted. Lakshmana is all right. Because of him, I remain as happy in the forest as in Ayodhya. Brother, where is that demoness ?

Lakshmana: What am I to say! [Stands with head bowed down]

[Then enters Surpanakha wailing aloud - The scene of 'Ninam']

Surpanakha : O my lord Ravana! My lord Kumbhakarna! My lord Vibhishana! Save me, O, save me from the violence of humans dressed up as hermits!

Srirama : Behold Lakshmana! Like a row of scarlet



clouds at eventide, like the part of a mountain full of minerals, like a row of green trees drenched in morning light here is seen the demoness, her red body soaked in blood.

Lakshmana : [to himself] By my good luck my lord has himself found out the heinous act.

Srirama : Lakshmana, you have done what had to be done. This is the right punishment for a woman in place of killing. It is heard she is Surpanakha, the elder sister of Khara and Dushana who live in Dandaka forest and the younger sister of Ravana.

Surpanakha : O men, remember your violence. You will see the consequence of this from today.

Lakshmana : O, you get away quickly.

Surpanakha : Let me show my condition to Khara and Dushana. [Exit Surpanakha]

Sita : Look my Lord! It seems as if the sun colours the tree tops with the blood of the demoness in the guise of the scarlet rays of the setting sun.

Srirama : [there the day ends] Put the sword in the sheath. Untie the bowstring. Let us bathe in the dust-free water, hold the breath in the wet limbs and perform the evening ritual reciting the *mantras*.

Lakshmana : As my lord orders.

[Srirama, Sita and Lakshmana hold their hands together and walk in a stylized manner —*Kalappurathu*— and retreat to the *nepathya*]

#### Cast

Srirama : Sivam Namboodiri

Sita : Shylaja

Lalita : Girija

Lakshmana : Raveendran

Surpanakha : Rama Chakravarthy

#### Accompanists

Mizhavu : P.V. Iswaranunni, A.N. Hariharan

Edakka : M. Narayanan Namboodiri

#### Make-up & costumes

P.M. Rammohan, A.S. Rangan, M. Kunjan

#### Troupe

Kerala Kalamandalam, Cheruthuruthy

27 March 1995

### KUTTIYATTAM

### UDYANAVARNANAM

from *Bhagavadajjukiyam* of Bodhayana

**Author :** The authorship of *Bhagavadajjukiyam* is attributed to Bodhayana, whose date has been fixed by some scholars to the 6th century A.D. This Bodhyana is of course different from the scholar of the same name who wrote a commentary of Badarayana's *Brahmasutra*. The poet seems to have belonged to the Baudhayana school of south India.

His Prahasana is marked by its lucid poetry, easy and conversational style and sense of humour.

**Text :** The story of *Bhagavadajjukiyam*, a Prahasana, is derived from a hilarious situation created by a 'bhagavan' (yogin) transposing his soul into the body of an 'ajjuka' (prostitute) and vice versa. This transmigration is necessitated by the yogin's eagerness to impart spiritual knowledge to his disciple Sandilya. The play has been quite popular on the Kutiyattam stage, and a detailed Attaparakam is available for the play.

**Text of performance :** The heroine Vasantasena and the Chedi Parabhritika enter the flower garden and walk around. The heroine tells her friend "Oh! Parahudiye. This garden looks so beautiful. In the spring season, all the plants and trees blossom and the flowers spread fragrance by the touch of the gentle breeze. Everything has become more attractive and beautiful. On one side the flies reach to enjoy honey by sucking and taking it to their wives." The Chedi (friend) says, "Oh! Ajjuke, this lotus lake has turned more beautiful. The lake is full of lotus flowers and buds. The swans come fast to eat the stalk of lotus and part it with their wives. They play happily in the lake. Hence the water is moving and the breeze being touched by the waves becomes cold and due to the fragrance of the lotus flowers becomes more enjoyable. Then the heroine says, "Hearing the sound of the fountains of the lotus lake, the peacocks suspecting the sound as thunderbolt, start dancing."

[The sound of the Mizhavu to support the dance]

Heroine : "*Hanje parahudiya kahim kahim upavasamo?*" Hello, Parabhritike, where shall we sit in the garden?

Chedi : "*Ajju ee etassim kussumida sahayaradi iya mandide siya pattaye mu kutha yam uva visiya ekkam vathuyam gayadu Ajjuya.*" Hello, Ajjuke, we shall sit on this granite pad under the Sahakari tree which is beautifully decorated by flowers and you sing a song.

Heroine : '*Evam hodu*'. Be so.

[Both sit on the granite pad and sing together]

*Parabhrita madhukara nada jyaghosha*

*kama esha udyane*

*Tishtati sahakara saro muhyati*

*nunam manopi muneh*

(In this garden the cuckoos flock together, eat the buds and tender leaves and are satisfied. The bees get intoxicated by drinking honey and sing beautifully at the dusk. The Lord of Love, Kamadeva is very happy and the garden is full on flowers. He thinks, let me go to encourage the minds of youngsters. He starts prepared with bow and arrow in his hands. The song of the bees and the cuckoos become the sound of the bow of Kamadeva. He waits on the branches of the mango tree. At this sight even the minds of the sages will be moved, no doubt.)

[The heroine and the friend exit]

Vasantasena (Heroine) : Shylaja

Parabhritika (Chedi) : Girija

Accompanists

Mizhavu : P.V. Iswaranunni, A.N. Hariharan

Edakka : M. Narayanan Namboodiri

Make-up & costumes

P.M. Rammohan, A.S. Rangan, M. Kunjan

Troupe

Kerala Kalamandalam, Cheruthuruthy

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27 March 1995

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## KUTTIYATTAM

### MAYASITANKAM

from *Ascharyachudamani* (Act III) of Shaktibhadra

Author & Text : See notes for *Udyana Pravesam*.

Plot : In a deliberate departure from Valmiki's version of Ramayana, the play presents Ravana and his charioteer disguising themselves as Rama and Lakshmana and abducting Sita. Surpanakha also disguises herself as Maya Sita. Ravana (as Maya Rama) concocts a story about Bharata being in danger from his enemies and needing help at Ayodhya. An unsuspecting Sita falls prey to this evil strategy for her abduction, and follows Ravana into the chariot.

Text of performance : After the traditional salutation to the Mizhavu, Sita sits on the *pitha* in a state of extreme anxiety and foreboding. She recites: *Api namaryaputrena Lakshmana sangamsyate* (I pray that Lakshmana may meet my beloved husband.) She fervently prays that Lakshmana may meet Rama and help him out of any possible danger he may be in.

The *nepathya* drumming stops and she hears, *Sita tvamapi mam upekshase* (Oh, Sita! Have you too left me alone and absolutely helpless?)

She exclaims, *Ham adanya khalvaham arya putram svarena anvichami*. She enacts: "Alas! what do I hear? I am really unfortunate. What can I do? I shall move in the direction from which I heard my husband's cry for help." After repeating the lines, she moves *pitha* away, moves in the stylised manner and goes to the *nepathya* (symbolic of moving towards Rama).

Scene 2: Enter Ravana, Surpanakha and Suta (charioteer). Ravana stands in front of the lamp. Suta to his right and Surpanakha to his left. Ravana enacts the popular sequence in Kutiyattam known as Panchanga (the description of the five parts of the physique—the head, face, eyes, breast and feet). Following this he enacts being smitten by Kama's arrows and continues his lovelorn contemplation of Sita's beauty.

Surpanakha recites : "*Arya, Pasya, Pasya—panita yantrkam ratnam svayameva gacchat*" and enacts : "Oh brother, the gem that was kept far away and

inaccessible to you is now approaching you voluntarily."

Ravana recites : "*Nayam upeksakala; Ramaupenainam arddhapathe pratibadhuami*." He enacts. "I should not lose this chance. This is the most opportune moment. I shall disguise myself as Rama and accost her midway."

Surpanakha recites : "*Sustvarya bhanati. Ahamapi taved Ramam Sitarupena nivrttipathe vilambayisye*." She enacts : "I too shall disguise myself as Sita and delay the return of Rama to Sita's side."

Ravana says : "*Badham prathamah kalpah*". He enacts : "Yes, the first step."

Now Surpanakha says : "*Ita param kim maya kartavyam*", and gesticulates, "Beyond this I have nothing more to do." Exit Surpanakha.

Suta [the charioteer] asks Ravana, "*Ayusman, kim mayedanam kartavyam?*" He enacts, "My lord, what service has to be rendered by me?"

Ravana whispers in Suta's ear, "*evam iva*." He enacts: "Oh, Suta, you must disguise as Lakshmana, get into the chariot and approach Sita in order to make her trust you and speak to her."

Suta recites, "*Yadajnapayatyayusman*", and enacts, "My lord, I shall do as ordered." Repeats the lines and continues as an aside after some contemplation, "*aho balavan bhartripinda; idamapi maya kartavyamasil*." He enacts : "Wonderful succour that my master provided me with—so I am bound to do as bidden." Repeats the lines and enacts, "It is not enough that I serve solely as his charioteer; I am also bound to cheat this chaste woman, an action which is despicable and cowardly." He enacts the stylized movements of driving a chariot and exits.

Ravana places the *pitha* in the middle of the stage. The *yavanika* (curtain) is held low. Ravana stands on the *pitha*. Maya Rama (Ravana in disguise as Rama) holding bow and arrow stands behind Ravana. Ravana enacts the chanting of magic hymns (*mayamantra*). The curtain is raised—Ravana exits and Maya Rama stands on the *pitha*. The curtain is removed. Maya Rama moves towards Sita.

Sita is walking in the stylised manner, symbolic of movement from one place to another. On seeing Maya Rama (she naturally mistakes him for the real Rama), she expresses her boundless joy and recites, "*hum, arya putra, jayatu arya putra*." Enacts, "It is really astonishing, my lord has come back. Again moving closer, she says '*jayatu arya putra*;' and enacts, "Hail my lord, be victorious!"

Ravana speaks, "*devi, ita, ita*", and enacts, "Respected lady, this way, this way." Then he says,

*mayabalena balinam ksanadacaranam  
jihvatale karatalodari vartamanam  
ivam Lakshmana: katham upeksitavan katham  
tvam  
ittham gatasi mrduna carana dvayena.*

He enacts the bare outline of this *sloka*. Then acts out the meaning in detail by taking up individual words, phrases etc. for elaboration, thus:



"Oh, charming lady, I instructed Lakshmana to be with you for your protection. Why did he leave you alone and go away? It was not proper of him to have done so. You are in the minds of cruel *raksasas* of this forest (the *raksasas* covet you) and these *raksasas* are to be found everywhere here. They could reach you without any resistance and harm you. It was because I was aware of this that I insisted on Lakshmana remaining with you, and thereby ensure your safety."

"What are the traits of these *raksasas*?" He recites, "*mayabalinam*", and gesticulates "by the powers of magic they assume the forms of different creatures and move about – an art in which they are very clever. Due to this power invested in them, no one can really divine their real nature. You are in the midst of such *raksasas*. Therefore I had instructed Lakshmana to remain with you and ensure your safety. Why did he go away from you, disregarding my definite instruction?"

He recites: "Even if Lakshmana had left you alone disregarding your security, you should have remained in the hermitage. Instead, you are walking about in the forest without any fear, stepping on the thorny bushes and sharp stones with your tender feet – why is it? I want all the reasons in full detail." He recites the latter half of the *sloka*.

Sita stands for a while in an extremely sorrowful mood and then says, "*hum, adhanyaya mayopalabdha, kumarakimīti mantrayate?*" and enacts, "Alas, the sinner that I am! I insulted Lakshmana in a variety of ways. How does he feel about it? Alas!"

Ravana, contemplating for a while and acts as if he has taken a decision. He recites, "*nunam vipralabdhasi mayamrgasvarena*" and enacts "that magic deer's cry has deceived you, I am sure." Repeats the lines.

Sita, brightening up, says, "*aryyaputra, kutra sa mayamrga:*" She enacts, "My beloved lord! Where has that magic deer gone?"

Ravana recites, "*pathi vipratipanna, svayam evagamisyati*", and enacts: "Oh, my charming lady, when I tried to catch that deer and came close to it, it hid itself in the dense jungle. Therefore I could not catch it. But I am sure that it will show up again. I have decided to kill it then. Deciding thus I left it and came to meet you."

The word "*Ayamayamagacchami*" is heard from the *nepathya*. Sita hears it and enacts: "Do I hear the words 'I am coming'?"

She recites, "*ham, ariyaputrasyeva svara*", and enacts: "Alas! What do I hear? It is the voice of my beloved husband."

Then Ravana says, "*manye, purvvaṁ api svara sadrsyena vancitasi*" and gesticulates, "You were deceived by a similar voice earlier too. I fear so"

Sita exclaims, "*nanu tena kumaropī mayopalabdha:*" and enacts: "On hearing such a voice earlier, I uttered harsh words insulting Kumara (Lakshmana)."

Then Suta (charioteer) enters disguised as

Lakshmana, enacting in the stylized manner the action of driving horses harnessed to the chariot. He approaches Maya Rama (Ravana) and pays obeisance. He then says, "*prasidatvarya*". While saying thus, he uses "*ayusman*" instead of "*aryya*" as he was wont to do as a mere charioteer. He realises the slip and hurriedly corrects it to "*aryya*" and becomes quite upset in the process. He then enacts: "Oh *aryya*, the respected brother be pleased with me". He then requests: "Please get into the chariot, Oh, respected brother" and enacts: "Oh, my revered brother, please get into the chariot along with my revered sister-in-law, quickly."

Ravana says, "Lakshmana, *kim idam*" and enacts, "Lakshman, who provided you with this chariot? We are dwellers of the forests. Of what use is a chariot to us?"

Maya Lakshmana says, "*aryya, samadhi caksusa Bharatasya paracakra bhayam upanatham drstva turnam yusmabhi: abhigantavyam iti tapasa ratham nirmaya mahyam datva Vanantaresvantarhitas-tapasvi jana*". He enacts the meaning "Oh, my elder brother, the great sages around here have divined by means of their mystic power that our brother Bharata (now ruling Ayodhya) has been attacked by enemies and advised me that we should proceed to Ayodhya to rescue him. To enable us to do so post haste, they, using their divine power, created this chariot, horses and all accoutrements and gave them to me. The sages then disappeared into the forest for continuing their penance."

Sita speaks aside, "*yujyate, nanu purvamapyasya haste dattam paramascaryacudamani, adbhutanguliyakam*" and enacts: "What Lakshmana said is true. He has brought *chudamani*, *anguliyar* and *kavacha* given by the sages earlier."

Ravana says, "*devi, kastavabhipraya*" and enacts the meaning, "Respected lady, what is your opinion?"

Sita replies, "*nanu mayapyesta vyo Bharatasya vyasananaso. vandanam guru janasyo ca.*" She enacts: "I wish to see Bharata helped out of his miserable situation and also pay my respects to our elders in the family."

Ravana says, "*Lakshmana, prathamam devimarohaya ratham*" and enacts: "Lakshmana, to begin with, help Sita to get into the chariot."

Maya Lakshmana recites, "*yadajnapayati ariya*" and enacts, "As ordered by my respected brother". He requests Sita, "Oh, my sister-in-law, please get into the chariot" by gesticulation.

Sita says, "*distya raksasa vancanamocita bhutva gacchama*", and enacts, "Fortunately we escape being cheated by *raksasas*."

Sita enters the chariot followed by Maya Rama (Ravana) and Maya Lakshmana (Suta). They move around in a stylised manner suggesting the movement of chariot. Maya Rama, in the stance of holding bow and arrow, stands in front of the lamp, looks at Sita and expresses joy and enacts, "What can I do to make her enjoy this moment?" He considers the means for a while and expresses as if

he has found a way out.

He speaks to Maya Lakshmana, "*Prasanna devi, Lakshmana turnam codayasvan*" and enacts "Terminating the stay in the forest, we return to Ayodhya—this revered lady is very happy at the moment. Drive the horses fast."

Maya Lakshmana says, "*Yadajnapayati ariya*" and enacts, "As ordered by my brother."

They move about in a stylised manner symbolic of a ride in a chariot. Ravana (Maya Rama) stands in front of the lamp. He looks amorously at Sita and wants to enjoy the pleasure of touching her. He moves backward to the left corner to the stage and takes rhythmic steps backwards and forwards. Repeats the movements and turns around. He stands for a while with an expression of indecision. Ravana : [to himself]

*mayi budhyapyasannigdam  
imam no sprstamutsahe  
Aho tatpurvadrstanam  
kastah strinam samagamah*

He enacts, "She firmly believes that I am Rama. Still, I am not bold enough to touch her even though she stands close and in front of me. It is really a very difficult matter to establish physical contact with a woman whom you have not seen (been acquainted with) before". They move around once again in a stylised manner, suggesting the movement of a chariot and exit from stage.

#### Cast

Surpanakha : M. Kochukuttan Chakyar  
Maya Lakshmana : Margi Madhu  
Maya Rama : Margi Narayanan  
Ravana : Margi Raman  
Sita : Margi Usha

#### Accompanists

Mizhavu : Kalamandalam Unnikrishnan Nambiar,  
Kalamandalam Ramana Unni, Kalamandalam  
Achuthanandan, Kalamandalam Mohanan  
Edakka, Thimila : Subramonian Potti, Margi Venugopal  
Tala : Margi Sathi

#### Make-up & costumes

Margi Somadas, Margi Raveendran

#### Troupe

Margi, Trivandrum

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28 March 1995

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## NANGIAR KUTTU KAMSA VADHAM

from *Srikrishna Charitam Nangiar Kuttu*

Author & Text : See notes for *Srikrishnaleela*.

Plot : Kamsa finds out that Krishna, destined to be his destroyer, lives in Ambadi. He deposes the Yadava leader Akrura to bring Balarama and Krishna to Mathura. Reaching the city of Mathura, Krishna kills

Kuvalayapida, the elephant, and also the wrestlers in Kamsa's court. These deaths evoke a mixed reaction in the spectators. Subsequently Krishna rushes up to Kamsa, fights with him and kills him.

*Text of performance* : In the days of yore, Sri Narayana came down to the earth in the guise of a man. Krishna, born as the son of Vasudeva and Devaki, for the purpose of exterminating the wicked and sinful people of the world. Krishna spent his childhood at Ambadi in the company of his elder brother Balarama. At that time Kamsa, ruler of Mathura, came to know from Narada that Krishna was going to be his murderer. He decided to kill Krishna and in order to attract him to Mathura, he started a *dhanur-yagna*. Kamsa sent Akrura, a Yadava chief, to Ambadi to fetch the two boys Krishna and Balarama. Krishna entered the Yagna-Sala and brought the yagna to an end by breaking the bow. He killed Kamsa's big elephant, Kuvalayapida, and plucked out its tusks. Then he and Balarama, each holding up one of the tusks, entered Kamsa's court.

[Looking at Krishna different persons react in different ways according to his or her character and state – thus giving rise to different emotions and sentiments. The performer here delineates in details the Navarasas.]

At that time, one of the wrestlers of Kamsa, seeking Krishna, said to the others: "Look, this is the man who is the great enemy of our master Kamsa; he is the villain living at Ambadi. Haven't we heard of him? Then (peering at the body of Krishna) he adds: "His body is as hard as diamond. But we can, with our mighty fists, beat him into pulp and kill him." Enacting so much, he shows his anger and determination by rubbing his hands. (RAUDRA RASA)

Next some others seeing Krishna coming (staring at him) say: "How amazing! We can never see another man having such confidence and faith in himself. Is he a prince? (Gazing at him) No, he is only a cowherd! Yet, how wonderful ! (ADBHUTA)

(Some women gazing at Krishna say, "Who can be this man who has such a beautiful body? Is he one of the Asvini *devas*?" (Thinking). "No, he cannot be because the two Asvini *devas* always go together; they are never separated. Then who is he? He must be Kamadeva himself who was supposed to have been burnt to ashes by Siva with his third eye. No, that story is wrong; Kamadeva is not dead; here he stands before us as Krishna." (SRINGARA)

Next, the Gopas, (looking at Krishna in an amusing way) say: "Look here, look here, see what is happening. The people of Mathura are gazing at Krishna with wide open eyes. This Krishna is only a man like us. Do you feel anything else? I don't see any cause for wonder". (HASYA)

Then the wicked kings: "So we have seen Krishna, this is the boy living at Ambadi, of whom we have heard as the boy who is born to kill Kamsa. (Peering at Krishna) His mind is full of pride and arrogance. What is his arrogance? He thinks that all the kings in the world must obey him. If they do not

do so he has the strength to kill them. This arrogance seems to have filled his body. Therefore let us get ready to fight with him." (On second thoughts): "Oh, shameful, it is not proper for us to go to fight with this insignificant boy. Why? Because we are great kings and if we become angry and go to fight, even Devendra will not stand against us. So how can we go to war with this insignificant boy?" (Thinking). "Hey, servants, go at once, make Krishna a captive and bring him here. He shall play tricks with him as we do with a monkey." (VIRA)

At that time Vasudeva and Devaki are shown as waiting anxiously for the arrival of Krishna. Enacting the part of Devaki, "I see Krishna coming." Owing to excessive love for her son milk flows out of her breasts. (Thinking). "Alas ! after giving delivery to him, this is the first time that I am seeing him. So I am very happy. But my sorrow also increases. Why? Because he is a young boy. He is not at all competent to face Kamsa's boxers in a fight. So I pray to God that no danger should come to him." (KARUNA)

Enacting the role of Kamsa, he sees somebody coming through a window on the seventh floor of the palace. What was the news? "Krishna came and has killed my elephant, Kuvalayapida? Is that the news?" (Thinking, slightly frightened) "Alas! my *mallas* (boxers) cannot kill Krishna? Is it possible? No, it cannot be true. Why? If glow-worms can shine in the full glare of sunlight, then Krishna's might will shine before that of my *mallas*." (At this moment he sees Krishna coming.) "This man is not a Gopala; he is the Antaka (Yama) himself who takes away the life of all. Surely he is coming to take away my life." (BHAYANAKA)

Some people do not know the strength of Krishna because they notice a contradiction – the contradiction between his soft body and his real strength. "There is no pleasure in seeing the fight between Krishna with a soft and light body and the *mallas* with hardened bodies and iron muscles. It is unfair. Who was it who designed a fight between these two unequals? Fie, we do not want to see such a fight. Let us go from here. (BIBHATSA)

Next Yogis react thus: "Is this Krishna whom we, the Yogis, consider the Chidananda-Svarupa Bhagavan who is beyond the reach of man's senses and minds? On account of our past virtuous actions we have been granted a vision of this supreme God. So let us take advantage of this opportunity to get the ultimate fulfilment of our lives." Deciding so, they sit, withdrawing their minds from all external objects, and go into a meditation. (SANTA)

Next Vrishnis react thus: This Krishna is Sri Narayana himself, our family-deity. There is no doubt about it. (They stand in a pose of reverence). In this way all classes of people in the assembly including the *mallas*, respond in their own way to the arrival of Krishna.

The *sloka* sung

*Mallanam asanilah, nram naravarah strinam  
Sinaro murtinan  
Gopanam svajano asatam ksitibhrtam*

*Sasta svapitrossisu  
Mrtyurbhoyapateh viradavidusam  
Tattvam param yeginam  
Vrsninam paradevateti vidito  
Rangam gatah sagrajah*

At the time (feigning to be *mallas*) "Krishna, if you are strong enough come to fight with us. Let us have a fight." (A fight follows between Krishna and the *mallas*). In the course of this fight Krishna seizes Chanura by his feet, whirls him, strikes him on the earth and kills him. Balarama pounds Mushtika again and again and kills him.

*Sloka-antari :*

*nirjitakhila mallendrau,  
Samarthan malla-vikraman  
canuramustikau virau  
hatva balan nanardatuh*

Next Krishna : "What does Kamsa say? Hey, soldiers, you go at once, capture and bind Krishna and Balarama, take them along the main streets and throw them far away from the city. Then kill Vasudeva and Devaki." Hearing these words of Kamsa (looking around) he sees Kamsa at the window sitting on his throne on the seventh floor of the building (Saying: "See what I am going to do!") he ran jumping up the steps to the seventh floor. Like a lion rushing towards a frightened deer, he rushes at Kamsa.

*Sloka-antari :*

*Tam simhanadavyathitam murarih  
bhayaturam bhanusamantejah  
Sandhagra-srngastiitha maugrasenim  
trastam mrgam simhamivasasuda*

In the course of the fight between Kamsa and Krishna, Krishna wrenches the sword and shield from Kamsa's hands. Then he strikes the sword at Kamsa's neck and separates his head from his trunk. He hurls Kamsa's dead body to the ground and dances with joy; at that time the gods above shower flowers on him. The people of Mathura feel that a painful thorn sticking in their hearts has been mercifully removed. *Sloka :*

*Kamsam vikamsam bhayakampitangam  
Kantho grhitva tarasa nihatya  
Akrasya ciksepa ca bhumi-prsthe  
Rudhaika salyam jagatamivadya*

*Cast*

Nangiar : Usha Nangiar

Recitation of text : Kapila

*Accompanists*

Mizhavu : C.K. Krishnan Nambiar, V.K. Hariharan

Edakka : O.N. Gopinathan Nambiar, Kalanilayam Unnikrishnan

Kurum Kuzhal : Sudhin Shankar

Talam : Nirmala Pauker

*Troupe*

Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam, Irinjalkuda

## KUTTYATTAM BALI VADHAM

from *Abhiseka Nataka* (Act I) of Bhasa

**Author :** Bhasa is one of the earliest Sanskrit dramatists whose works have been recovered, but nothing concrete is known about the date, place or even authorship of his works. Scholars have put his date as 5th or 4th century B.C. and ascribed thirteen plays to him. Though these thirteen plays were discovered by Ganapati Sastri in Trivandrum as late as 1912, they had been rather well-preserved in the repertoire of the Kutiyattam stage.

**Text :** *Abhiseka Nataka* deals with the story of Ramayana. The story begins in the middle, with the truce between Rama and Sugriva, and courses through several incidents like Bali's death, Hanuman's crossing the ocean and conveying Rama's message to Sita, the battle between Raksasas and the monkeys, the killing of Ravana, Sita's fire ordeal, and ends with Rama's coronation. In its dramatisation, *Abhiseka Nataka* almost entirely conforms to the Ramayana story, with little or no change in plot or characterisation.

**Plot :** 'Bali Vadham' deals with the incidents leading to the killing of Bali, the king of the monkeys. It describes the alliance between Rama and Sugriva (Bali's brother), Sugriva's challenge to Bali for a fight, Bali's acceptance of the challenge despite Tara's pleas. While the two brothers are engaged in fight, Rama shoots Bali down with an arrow, hiding behind a tree. The death-scene of Bali, in which he traverses through several conflicting emotions of outrage (at Rama), reconciliation (with his fate, as also with his brother), sorrow, compassion and finally, calm, is the high point of this act.

**Text of performance :** After the ritual drumming called *mizhavu ochappeduttuka*, the Nambiar comes and stands in front on the oil-lamp of the stage with great devotion and recites the verse of the prayer with which the play begins.

**Meaning of verse :** "May Lord Sri Rama protect you - Rama who entered into a treaty with Sugriva; who lifted and hurled the dead body of the demon Dundubhi; who in no time cut down Sapta Salas (seven palmyra palms) with one arrow to instil confidence in Sugriva; who killed Bali while he was fighting with his brother in order to confirm his friendship with Sugriva and who is a diadem on the crest of Surya (Sun) dynasty."

When the curtain is removed we see Sugriva sitting in a mood of deep sorrow and dejection. Sugriva expresses through hand gestures and facial expression his agonies and his hardships in living alone in a solitary wood.

Sugriva, for fear of his elder brother Bali, has taken refuge in the Malayavan mountain. Hounded out of his palace, Sugriva bemoans his sad lot, living

alone in the forest facing the rigours of nature. He sees, around him in the forest, a reflection of his own mental state. "My good God, will my miseries never end? Exposed to the sun, drenched by the rains, shivering in the cold and open to the winds, I live in the forest. Would I ever see a normal comfortable life? Is there anything I can do in the matter? Alas! no."

Thus sorrowing he decides to take a peep at what is in store for him in the future. He plucks a small leaf from the bush and tosses it. Scrutinizing the fallen leaf and the oracular message it portends, he pronounces the result, "No friend, but there is, foe!" Some distance away he notices the young one of a deer grazing. Suddenly hearing the twang of a bow-string, the frightened deer runs to take cover. But observing a lion sleeping in the bush he had approached, he stands stunned shivering with fear. Observing this scene he explains, "Oh! God, my destiny is no different than that of this deer; and grieving thus, he repeats the leaf-test and reading the signs reaches the finding, "There is friend and there is foe!" Now looking around he sees a serpent which observing an eagle floating above in the sky, looks out for a hole to hide in. Presently it spots one and promptly takes shelter in it. Not quite satisfied with this omen, Sugriva tries the leaf-tossing test which said, "No foe, but friend, there is." About this time a peacock begins its dance but a sudden forest fire starts; the frightened peacock flies to a high rock and continues its dance when the rains flush out the fire. The sight of this scene pleases Sugriva.

It is at this juncture that Hanuman appears; Sugriva welcomes him and they become friends. When Hanuman and Sugriva are together, they notice two men approaching some distance. Suspecting danger, Sugriva sends Hanuman to find out who they are. Hanuman escorts Rama and Lakshmana to Sugriva and introduces them to him. Rama and Sugriva enter into an agreement of mutual help and Rama agrees to kill Bali. [This is a solo enactment by Sugriva]

[Exit Sugriva]

[Then enter Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and Hanuman]

[Sugriva accompanied by Hanuman, Rama and Lakshmana, start for 'Kishkindha', Bali's kingdom. On the way Rama fells the Sapta Salas (seven palmyra palms) with a single arrow]

Rama : Sugriva, look this way, this way. Sugriva, in this fight you will soon find Bali knocked down by me, lying on the ground with his body all cut and torn with my arrows. I am going to felling him in a moment. Standing by me you will presently see him lying dead on the ground.

Sugriva : My lord, I know that with your grace and blessings I can conquer even the kingdom of the gods. How much easy then, it will be to conquer a kingdom of the monkeys! I am sure of this because : Oh, valiant lord, the arrow that you have discharged from your bow has pierced and passed



through the trunks of seven big Sala trees of this forest, each as tall and formidable as a peak of the Himalayas. The arrow after passing successively through these trees has continued its course with unabated speed and force and pierced the earth, reached Patala (the nether world) and has returned to kill Bali after having washed itself in the ocean, so I have no doubt at all that Bali will be killed.

Hanuman : Oh, lord, the comforting and reassuring words coming from your mouth have dispelled all our fears and sorrows. Now let us proceed towards the mountain (the abode of Bali) as black as clouds to secure victory for Sugriva.

Lakshmana : Look sir, this place which is full of trees must certainly be Kishkindha.

Sugriva : What Lakshmana has said is quite true. Yes lord, we who are protected by your strong arms, have reached Kishkindha which is protected by Bali's strong arms. Sir, please wait here. I shall go and challenge Bali to a duel in a thundering voice which will shake all the three worlds.

Rama : Let it be so, Go now.

Sugriva : I humbly obey your order.

[All exeunt]

[Sugriva re-enters]

Sugriva : Your Majesty, Sugriva who did not wrong you in anyway, was disclaimed by you and expelled from your kingdom. Now he has come back, intent upon doing reverence to you at your feet, but in battle!

[Exit Sugriva]

[The entrance of Bali. As a prelude to the entrance, he hammers at the door of the *nepathya* with his fists, and roars out angrily. He then calls out from the *nepathya* in a loud voice with a slight stammer] :

"What? What? It is Sugriva, is it?"

[Bali appears from behind a curtain]

Bali : What? Is it Sugriva, is it? [He gets up and walks across the stage, preparing to leave. Looks towards the left and sees that his wife, Tara, has caught hold of his garment.] My beautiful Tara, please release your hold on my dress. I shall fight with Sugriva; you shall see Sugriva lying exhausted on the ground with his body hideously mangled by my blows and covered all over with blood.

Tara : Be gracious to me, your majesty. There must be sufficient reason for Sugriva's arrival. Therefore, better seek the counsel of your ministers before going out to accept his challenge.

Bali : Listen my beautiful Tara, I will surely defeat Sugriva even if he is supported by the mighty Indra himself; or even if he is backed by Lord Shiva himself armed with his sharp-edged axe; or let the lotus-eyed Mahavishnu himself support him against me; or let Mahavishnu take the form of Narasimha and come to protect Sugriva from me. But I assure you none of them will come and take

arms against me.

[Here the actor going off the text of the play enacts the story of Pahlada.]

Long ago, Hiranyakasipu, King of the Asuras, had a son named Pahlada who was a great devotee of Vishnu. Chagrined by his inordinate devotion to Vishnu, Hiranyakasipu called his son to his side and angrily asked him: "My son, whom are you adoring and worshipping?" Pahlada replied: "Father, I am devoted to none other than Mahavishnu who is the lord and protector of the three worlds." Hiranyakasipu angrily retorted: "Am I not the protector of the three worlds? Who is this Vishnu of yours? Pahlada calmly and firmly replied: "It is Vishnu who is the lord and protector of all the world." Then Hiranyakasipu asked him: "Where is this Vishnu? Where does he reside?" Pahlada replied: "Vishnu is everywhere in all the worlds; he is omnipresent."

Hiranyakasipu : Is he present everywhere?

Pahlada : Yes, he is present everywhere and in all things.

Hiranyakasipu : Is he present in this pillar?

Pahlada : Certainly, he is in that pillar.

[Hiranyakasipu, in a fit of anger, struck at that pillar with his sword and split the pillar. Vishnu, in the form of Narasimha, emerged out of the broken pillar and killed the king.]

Bali continues : Tara, even that Narasimha will not take arms against me in the fight with Sugriva. You need not be sad or frightened at all.

Tara : Be gracious to me, your majesty. Please give this person a blessing, your majesty.

Bali : Tara, hear about my valour. In the days of yore, when all the gods and the demons together were churning the sea of milk for obtaining 'Amrita' (the elixir of life), I went there and asked all the gods and the demons to stand aside. Then I grabbed the head of the terrible serpent Vasuki with his wide open eyes, with one hand and his tail with the other hand, alone and unaided, churned the sea, while the gods and the demons stood looking on with amazement.

[Here again the actor enacts the story of Amrit Manthan.]

Listen, Tara, long ago, when the *devas* were all stricken with old age, the Devas and Asuras thought out a plan for preventing and remedying old age. They entered into a friendly agreement to churn the ocean of milk in order to obtain Amrita. Their plan was to use the Manthara mountain the churning-rod and the snake, Vasuki as the rope. While churning both the Devas and Asuras became exhausted. At that time I churned the ocean singlehanded, holding one end of Vasuki with one hand. Seeing me do this work, both the Devas and Asuras stood astounded. Therefore, I, who did this astounding work, is not afraid of anybody.

Tara : Be gracious to me, your majesty.

Bali : No more! You simply do as I say! Go inside the house!

Tara : This luckless person is going. [Exit]

Bali : Ah! Tara has gone. Now I will go and finish off Sugriva. [Hurrying forward] Sugriva, stop, stop! Sugriva, even if you have Indra or the almighty Lord Vishnu as your ally, once you come within my field of vision, you will not go away alive.

Sugriva : As your majesty commands.

[They battle with each other]

Sri Rama : Look, look, Bali is rushing towards Sugriva, biting his lips and showing his enormous teeth, his eyes fierce and red with anger, shaking his clenched fists threatening like the fires of deluge to burn everything to ashes.

Lakshmana : Oh, brother, look at Sugriva. Throwing away all civilized rules of behaviour, he has given himself up to the impulses of his beastly or monkey-nature and is fighting with Bali. His eyes shine red like fully-blossomed lotuses; his long round shaping arms, resplendent with gold bracelets, are raised high in a threatening gesture.

[Sugriva is struck down by Bali]

Hanuman : [with alarm and anxiety] Alas! Look at Sugriva's fallen and helpless condition. Bali is certainly much more strong and powerful; my master (Sugriva) is weak. Please remember this and the pledge that you have made to protect him.

Sri Rama : Hanuman, don't be alarmed or worried. Look, I have already taken action [discharges an arrow at Bali]. Alas! hit by my arrow Bali has already fallen.

Lakshmana : See, Bali with his strong arms lies with his body split by the arrow and covered all over with blood. His red eyes are cast downwards as if he is getting ready to go to Yamaloka (the kingdom of the god of death).

Bali : [Reading the letters of the name of the sender on the arrow, to Rama] Rama, is it proper that you who is valorous, who stands steadfast your duties as a prince, and who is intent upon leading the people along the path of righteousness, should deceive me in battle in this manner, without the least suspicion that you are committing an unrighteous act? Oh! What a pity!

You who is good by nature and has a good reputation among people, has now earned a bad name by deceptively killing me in this manner.

Oh Rama, you have the matted hair of a hermit and have, as garment, the bark of a tree. But your thoughts seem to be at variance with your mode of dress. You concealed yourself and killed me while I was battling against my brother. Isn't this an unrighteous act?

Sri Rama : So you consider that concealing oneself in order to kill is an unrighteous act?

Bali : Undoubtedly it is.

Sri Rama : That is not true. Look! In hunting, one conceals oneself in order to kill animals. Now this

is not considered to be an unrighteous act. Since you are an animal and you deserved to be killed, I concealed myself in order to kill you.

Bali : So you consider that I deserve to be killed ?

Sri Rama : Without a shadow of doubt.

Bali : For what reason ?

Sri Rama : Because you have accepted a forbidden woman.

Bali : Accepted a forbidden woman, eh? For us this is not an unrighteous act.

Sri Rama : Sir, is it proper that you who is capable of distinguishing between the righteous and the unrighteous, and who is the king of the monkeys, should consider yourself to be a mere animal and accept your brother's wife ?

Bali : In this matter of accepting one's brother's wife, I and my brother Sugriva are equally guilty. But you have punished me alone. You have not punished Sugriva.

Sri Rama : I punished you because you deserved to be punished. One does not punish the innocent.

Bali : Sugriva accepted my wife; and I am his elder brother. Therefore how can I be guilty in accepting his wife?

Sri Rama : There is no law which permits an elder brother to accept a younger brother's wife.

Bali : In that case I have nothing to say by way of reply. Since it is you who has punished me, I am now indeed purged of all my sins.

Sri Rama : So be it!

Sugriva : Alas! Oh! king of the monkeys, with a gait resembling that of an elephant, seeing your two arms which resemble the trunk of an elephant with their shoulder rings fallen off due to the force of the enemy's weapon, lying stretched over the bare earth, my mind seems to lose its balance.

Bali : Sugriva, do not grieve. This is simply the way of the world.

[From inside] Alas! Alas! His majesty!

Bali : Sugriva, don't let the women come here. They need not see me in this condition.

Sugriva : As your majesty commands! Hanuman, go and carry out the order.

Hanuman : As the prince commands! [Exit]

[Re-enters Hanuman bringing Angada, Bali's son, with him]

Hanuman : Angada, this way, this way!

Angada : Having heard that his majesty, the king of the monkeys, is approaching his end, I am on my way to see him, with a heart laid down with grief. Hanuman, where is his majesty?

Hanuman : Here is his majesty, his chest rent by the arrow, lying on the earth like the Krauncha mountain pierced by the lance of Lord Subramanya.

Angada : [approaching] Alas! Alas! His majesty! In former times the mighty king of the monkeys

always used to lie down in comfort. I now see you rolling on the earth, with your limbs weakened, Sir, do you now wish to leave this body, pierced by the arrows, and enter the paradise of heroes?

[Prostrates himself at the feet of Bali]

Bali : Angada, don't grieve unnecessarily. Oh Sugriva, forgetting all the wrongs committed by me towards you and leaving aside anger, you, who has now become the king of the monkeys, should tread the path of righteousness and accept the protection of this boy, the heir of our race.

Sugriva : As your majesty commands.

Bali : Oh Rama, you should consider any wrongs these persons may commit as arising due to the fickleness common to all monkeys, and forgive them.

Sri Rama : By all means.

Bali : Sugriva, accept this golden necklace, the hereditary wealth of our race.

Sugriva : I am indeed honoured.

Bali : Hanuman, get me some water.

Hanuman : As your majesty commands!

[Makes his exit and then re-enters]

Hanuman : Here is water.

Bali : [sipping the water] It seems that my soul is leaving this body. Here are the great rivers, headed by Ganga! Here are the celestial damsels headed by Urvashi! And here is the air-chariot, borne by one thousand swans, sent by the Lord of Death to convey the souls of heroes! So be it! I am coming!

[Bali on the point of death makes convulsive movements of his face and limbs and climacteric breathing of Vayus such as Kshudraka, Tamaka, Cohnina, Mahan and Urdhva. These laboured breaths become more intense showing that death is close. Bali dies.]

[All say together: "Ha! Ha! the great king".]

Sri Rama : Alas! Bali is dead and he has attained heaven. Sugriva, perform his funeral rites.

Sugriva : As the Lord orders, so it will be done.

Sri Rama : Lakshmana, perform the coronation ceremony of Sugriva.

Lakshmana : As brother orders, so it will be done.

#### Cast

Bali : Ammannur Madhava Chakyar

Sugriva : Ammannur Parameswaran Chakyar

Sri Rama : G. Venu

Lakshmana : Sooraj Nambiar

Tara : Usha Nangiar

Hanuman : Kalamandalam Radhakrishnan

Angada : Ranjeeth

#### Accompanists

Mizhavu : C.K. Krishnan Nambiar, V.K. Harsharan,

P.P. Rajeev, K.P. Narayanan Nambiar

Edakka : O.N. Gopinathan Nambiar, Kalanilayam

Unnikrishnan

Kurum Kuzhal : Sudhin Shankar

Talam : Nirmala Paniker

#### Troupe

Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam,  
Irinjalakuda

29 March 1995

#### KUTTIYATTAM

#### TORANAYUDDHAM

from *Abhiseka Nataka* (Act III) of Bhasa

Author & Text : See notes for *Bali Vadham*

*Plot* : Ravana, receiving the news of the destruction of Asoka Vanika (Asoka's Grove) by a monkey (Hanuman), reflects on his past life, his feats of lifting Mount Kailasa and pleasing Lord Siva, as well as displeasing Parvati and receiving her curse. At the news that the monkey killed many Raksasas, Vibhishana tries to advise Ravana, but the latter disregards his attempts and orders him to bring Hanuman. There is a heated exchange between Ravana and Hanuman, with Vibhishana again offering good advice to Ravana. Angry and upset, Ravana orders to set fire to Hanuman's tail.

*Text of performance* : The curtain is removed showing Ravana in a reflective mood. He is surprised and even unnerved at the havoc a monkey is capable of, after getting into the impregnable Lanka.

Ravana : Alas, what a pity! Years ago I conquered all the Devas and Asuras and the three worlds. As I stormed the Kailasa (the mountain abode of Lord Siva and his consort Goddess Parvathi), Parvathi got frightened and trembled with fear. However, Siva was pleased with me, but Parvathi and Nandikeswara, irked by the indifference and disrespect shown by me, cursed me, may be those curses have now started taking effect on me.

[Here the actor, going off the text of the play, develops through elaborate *abhinaya* the theme of Kailasodharanam and Parvathi-viraham.

Kailasodharanam is the lifting and tossing of the Kailasa mountain in the air. Parvati-viraham is estrangement of Parvathi with Siva as she grew jealous of her lord's relationship with the Goddess Ganga.

Returning home after a successful battle with Vaisravana, Ravana finds the path of his Pushpakavimana (the flying chariot) obstructed by Mount Kailasa; Ravana gets down from his chariot, uproots the mountain, and throws it up in the air. The *abhinaya* here includes a long description of the mountain, its enormous size, the valleys, peaks, caves, rocks, smaller streams trickling down from the top and joining together to make great, meandering rivers, etc.

At that time, Parvathi and Siva are conversing in Kailasa. She is on his lap. She asks him, 'What is that on your head', (suspecting Gangadevi to be there).]

Siva : It is water.



Parvathi : But I find no face; how can it be there?

Siva : No, it is a lotus flower.

Parvathi : But how then the curls of hair ?

Siva : It is only a row of bees humming and settling down on the flower.

Parvathi : But, then what about the eye-brows ?

Siva : They are ripples in the water.

Parvathi : Eyes?

Siva : No, they are two black fishes.

Parvathi : And the two breasts?

Siva : They are Chakravaka birds.

Parvathi : Clearly, you are deceiving me?

[Saying thus, and no longer able to stand the sight of Ganga being borne by her Lord, the jealous Parvathi leaves him. But at this moment Kailasa was being lifted up. The violent tremors caused by Ravana frightens her and she immediately rushes back seeking safety in the loving embrace of Siva. The actor assumes the roles of Siva and Parvathi alternately. As Parvathi, he shows the gradual growth of her jealousy towards Ganga and the mixed emotions of "Pranayakopam". Siva, Parvathi and their devoted servant Nandikeswara are pleased with Ravana as his deed led to the happy reconciliation between Siva and Parvathi. They appear before Ravana and offer him boons. But Ravana arrogantly refuses to receive honours from Parvathi as she is a woman and Nandikeswara as he appeared in the form of a monkey. Enraged at the insult, Parvathi and Nandikeswara curse Ravana that monkeys will be the cause of his ruin.]

[Ravana exit]

## II

The curtain is held for the *purappad* (entrance) of Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana, who is of a gentle disposition. Vibhishana is on his way to Ravana. He is critical of Ravana's action in abducting Sita and in rejecting his repeated advice for returning her to Rama.

Vibhishana : Alas! The king's (Ravana's) mind has turned from the path of virtue. I have told him several times to return Sita to Rama. But he won't listen, to the utter grief of his friends.

[Exit]

## III

[Ravana enters, takes his seat and waits for Vibhishana. The latter appears and approaches Ravana.]

Vibhishana : Victory to the king.

Ravana : Vibhishana, come be seated.

Vibhishana : Yes, I am sitting.

Ravana : Vibhishana, why do you look so upset and distraught?

Vibhishana : Distress is the lot of people whose master never listens to their words.

Ravana : Forget it. You just go and bring that monkey.

Vibhishana : As you please.

[Exeunt both]

## IV

[Curtain is held for Hanuman. He enters being carried and led by two Raksasa servants of Ravana. Vibhishana also accompanies him. After having been left alone on the stage, Hanuman does some movements characteristic of a monkey.]

Hanuman : [to himself] It is not that I was taken captive by that wicked Raksasa (Ravana). Rather I let myself be captured, so that I can meet Ravana in person.

[In the course of the *abhinaya* of the above lines Hanuman describes in detail how he wanted to leave behind some record of his visit to Lanka and meeting Sita; how he, with that object, destroyed the garden; how he killed the garden keepers, the army commanders (Panchasenapathi) of Ravana and his son Akshakumara and how he eventually decided to allow himself to be taken captive by Indrajit in order that he might see Ravana himself. He also narrates, giving occasion for much humour and fun, how the guards in the garden were asleep snoring deeply; how he tied the beards and hair together and interchanged their weapons; how they all woke up and ran helter-skelter, shrieking in excitement and terror. Hanuman then leaves the stage.]

[Ravana returns to his seat. Hanuman and Vibhishana appear. Without being asked, Hanuman takes his seat beside Ravana in utter disregard of him. Ravana and Hanuman quarrel and Hanuman, full of confidence, makes fun of Ravana with his pranks and antics.]

Hanuman : Oh, king, how do you do?

Ravana to Vibhishana : Is that handiwork [meaning the destruction of Ravana's garden] done by this one?

Vibhishana : Yes, more than that.

Ravana : Hey, monkey, who are you? Why did you come here disregarding us?

Hanuman : Listen! I am born of Anjana and the wind-God. My name is Hanuman, a monkey, and I am a messenger of Rama.

Vibhishana : King, you hear?

Ravana : Yes, but what for?

Vibhishana : Hanuman, what are Rama's words?

Hanuman : Hear Rama's command.

Ravana : How dare you speak of Rama's command? Finish this monkey off.

Vibhishana : Be pleased, Oh! King. Messengers should not be killed whatever be their crimes and wrongs. You may do what you like after hearing Rama's words.

Ravana : Monkey, what did that 'man' say?

Hanuman : Hear! No matter whether you take refuge under Lord Siva or escape into the inaccessible nether-world I will send you to Death with your body all chopped up with my sharp arrows.

Ravana : I defeated *devas* with divine arrows under my control. Even Vaishavana is in a fix losing his Pushpaka (divine chariot) to me. Then how can

Rama, a mere human creature, confront me.

Hanuman : Then why did you choose to steal his wife secretly.

Vibhishana : Well-spoken, Hanuman – Oh, great king, is it not by deceit that you abducted Sita disguising yourself as a mendicant and treacherously drawing Rama away from her?

Ravana : Why do you defect to the enemy side?

Vibhishana : Oh, king, bear with me. My words are for good. Return Sita, the wife of Rama, to him. I wish that you, the great among Raksasas be not the cause of the ruin of this race.

Ravana : Vibhishana, enough of this. How can a deer kill a lion? How can a jackal kill a mighty elephant?

Hanuman : Ravana, is it proper that you speak of Rama this way? You devoid of all virtues. Wicked Ravana, Rama is the hero of heroes. Like Indra, he is without equal. You have lost all virtues. You are of no significance.

Ravana : What, kill this monkey or wait; killing of messengers is reprehensible. Set fire to its tail.

[Hanuman is taken out leaving Ravana alone on the stage]

Ravana : [to himself] Let me make necessary arrangements now for the protection of the city of Lanka.

#### Cast

Ravana : Sivan Namboodiri

Vibhishana : Narayana Chakyar

Hanuman : Rama Chakyar

Rakshasas : Krishna Kumar, Kanaka Kumar

#### Accompanists

Mizhavu : P. V. Iswaranunni, A. N. Hariharan

Edakka : M. Narayanan Namboodiri

#### Make-up & costumes

P. M. Rammohan, A. S. Rangan, M. Kunjan

#### Troupe

Kerala Kalamandalam, Cheruthuruthy.

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29 March 1995

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#### KUTTIYATTAM

#### JATAYUVADHANKAM

from *Ascharyachudamani* (Act III) of Shaktibhadra

Author & Text : See notes for *Udyana Pravesam*

Plot : Ravana in disguise as Maya Rama is carrying away Sita in a chariot. The charioteer (Suta) is in disguise as Maya Lakshmana. When in the chariot, Sita's hand, while tying her hair chances to touch Ravana. By the power of the 'Choodamani' (magic gem given to Sita by Rama for protection against harm) which Sita is wearing on her finger, Ravana's evil spell is removed and his 'maya' cease to work. The 'maya' Rama form is lost and Ravana appears in his true form. But, Ravana does not realise his change of form.

Text of performance : As the curtain is removed, Ravana

appears in his true form. Sita is frightened. She says, "This is not my lord (Rama). Ravana – "Respected lady do not be afraid, I am Rama only, Am I not your beloved husband?" Ravana turns to Maya Lakshmana (Suta or charioteer) and asks him, "Why is this (confusion)?"

Sita cries – "I am doomed."

Maya Lakshmana replies to Ravana, "What is the fun of your saying you are Rama. You are 'Rama' by words only.

After *sloka*, Maya Lakshmana acts. "Your disguise as Rama has failed. Now you have the protruding canine teeth (of Raksasas or demons). They put to shame the crescent moon in beauty. You appear cruel looking and huge as the Himavan (mountain), quite dark as the rain bearing clouds. Your ten heads look in ten different directions. You are terribly charming and enchanting, being in your natural form. Ravana, quite surprised and embarrassed (at his foolish affirmation that he is Rama only) says, "How did this (change of form) happen?"

Muses for a while, then manages to cover his embarrassment cleverly and says, "I am sorry I disguised myself as that worthless Rama. Really despicable! Now I have cast aside that unpleasant disguise and recovered my worthy self," laughs and roars loudly. Enacts holding the 'Chandrahasta' sword proudly. Looks at Sita, who is to his right and standing terror stricken and weeping. Gestures, "Alas, she is grief stricken and weeping. I shall console her," says – "Respected lady, be not afraid. Why? I shall explain."

Recites *sloka* and enacts its meaning thus: "Oh charming lady do not be afraid of me. There is none else in the three worlds as charming and virtuous as you. You don't have to fear anything. You can live with me with all comforts." He watches her, thinks, and asks, "Why are you so sorrowful? When you are with me, even the celestial world is in my control." Watches and continues, "You worry unnecessarily. You need not hope that your husband or any one else will rescue you. So do not worry." Continues, "When I am the enemy to be won over, there is none in the three worlds to release you from my hold. Even a combined effort of the Devas (Gods) and Asuras (Demons) will fail. They would not even contemplate such an attempt. Why?" Recites *sloka* and enacts.

"On my expeditions I have tested my strength against the celestial elephants guarding the cardinal points of heaven, one by one. In this trial of strength, their tusks tried to pierce my chest in vain. They could leave only scars on my chest, which are here (on my chest) for you to see for yourself. Who is there to challenge such a person as me and try to rescue you?"

Sita cries, "My revered husband, please rescue me, Lakshmana, save me."

Suta (Charioteer) in disguise as Maya Lakshmana, "Why should I alone be in disguise? I shall also assume my real form." So saying he turns around thrice and exits. The real Suta takes the stage and says aside, "He is not Lakshmana." She is terrified and cries. She exclaims, "Oh my beloved husband, Oh my Lakshmana, please rescue me from the clutches of the raksasa (demon)."

Now Jatayu (the divine bird and friend of Rama) exclaims from the *nepathya*, "I am coming." Suta looks around, fixes his eyes on the back left corner of the stage and enacts the approach of a huge bird (vulture). He reports to (his master) Ravana, "Oh my lord! See, see!" Recites *sloka* and enacts its meaning. "Oh lord, a bird approaches to interrupt our forward movement. How does he look? His beak is like a hook. His neck is like a golden stem. His eyes are as red as cut rubies. The huge air currents caused by the movements of his wings, cause the trees to swing wildly and shed their flowers and even flower buds, which fall to the ground. See such a terrible bird."

Sita, crying, says, "Who is there to save me. Whom should I approach for refuge."

The curtain is held on the raised portion of the stage, Jatayu enters (a lighted lamp and rain of flowers accompany his entry). He makes ritualistic movements inside the curtain.

The curtain is removed.

'Pravesikam' and 'Pakshistobham' (entry and the characteristic bird stances) are enacted to the accompaniment of special rhythm pattern – termed as 'Lakshmi thala'.

Jatayu acts as being seated atop the 'Prasravana' mountain and gestures, "What do I hear? Is it? 'Who is to save me? Who is to save me? Who is my refuge?' It is Sita crying?"

Recites and enacts, "Sita, I am here to save you. Don't worry and cry. I am a close friend and comrade of the great King Dasaratha of the solar race. I am Jatayu. It is just to save you that I am here. I am coming."

Turning to Ravana, "Oh Ravana stop your chariots. You let free Sita, beloved of Rama, the great hero. You set her free and go away. If people make mistakes unknowingly, I correct them and forgive them. So if you want to be alive, set her free and be gone!"

Ravana stands pensive for a while and asks, "This bird says, he won't mind my mistakes!" With a contemptuous gesture, orders the charioteer. "You whip him away and clear the way for us to proceed. He does not know how invincible I am."

Jatayu, "I know, I know everything about you. Recites *sloka* and enacts. "Oh wicked Raksasa (demon) your valour is all too well known. When you lifted Kailasa mountain, it fell on your chest and hurt your pride. I know it. King Karthaveeryarjuna tied your hands and threw you into prison. I know that too. Bali had you tied inextricably with his tail. Your hands still retain the marks of that strangulation by Bali's tail. Thus you are known throughout the three worlds as 'Dhoomakethu', a symbol of everything inauspicious. I fully know your greatness.

Ravana, indignantly, "This bird raves a lot". Recites *sloka* and enacts, "Oh Suta, drive the horses. Why so? Let Sita witness my powers. I will cut the wings of this haughty bird while moving along in the sky as I did to Mahendra mountain long long ago."

Jatayu [entering] says, "Let us see what happens." Recites *sloka* and enacts, "Oh Ravana, in the presence of this Kshatriya lady Sita, I will peck your ten faces with my sharp beak and make deep cuts. I will throw

the pieces of flesh in all the ten directions. Ho do you look? You are as dark as the clouds at the time of Pralaya (deluge) and as big as the mountain in your stature. Your heads appear as if they are the peaks of Anjana mountain with wild fire burning brightly over them in the dark night; with ruddy hair waving in the wind. Again, when I peck at your neck with furious thrusts, the veins will open up and the blood torrenting out will add its red hue to the entire environment." Enacts pecking at him fiercely and cries out, "See."

After *sloka*, proceeds to stop Ravana. Ravana stops him and they are engaged in fighting pecking with beak, wounding with claws, beating with wings etc. As the fight goes on Ravana thinks, "This bird cannot be defeated by straight fighting. He must be cheated and killed. What can I do?" Enacts, "Yes, there is a trick to play." He enquires of Jatayu, "Where is your most vulnerable part (*marmā*). The gullible Jatayu replies with candour, "It is in my right wing. Now could you tell me the vulnerable part of your body?"

Ravana dishonestly answers, "It is my big toe in my right leg." The fight continues. Jatayu tries to peck at the big toe of Ravana's right leg. Using this chance, Ravana cuts off the right wing of Jatayu, holding the wing with his left hand. Jatayu falls wounded. He tries to fly with his left wing; but in vain and breathes heavily.

As Jatayu falls, Sita cries. She screens her eyes with her hands; not being able to stand the pitiable sight.

Suta enacts – "This bird has been cut with the mighty divine sword. This vulture is cut." Recites *sloka* and enacts its meaning thus: "Here the bird, with its body covered with drops of blood and muddy in appearance, with its neck turned around due to exhaustion, lies. It appears like an evening cloud in the sky." Sita, weeping, recites and enacts, "Alas, God is unkind. Unfortunate that I am, the bird came to save me, taking pity on me. By another misfortune it was also killed. The bird too had to fall a prey to the wickedness of Ravana."

Ravana orders, "Suta (charioteer), drive the horses.

Suta, "As ordered, my Lord."

Suta continues, "How is this master of mine?"

Recites *sloka* and enacts its meaning thus: "To the dictates of Dharma (righteous conduct), worldly wisdom, means of salvation to the other world, tenets of the Dharma *shastras* (ethics), action according to the need of the times etc., which are to be scrupulously adhered to, he does not listen. What is the state of Kamadeva? Those, under the influence of amorous passions, do not listen to the relative merits of good and evil conducts. Because of this there is (absolutely) no use in advising him about them."

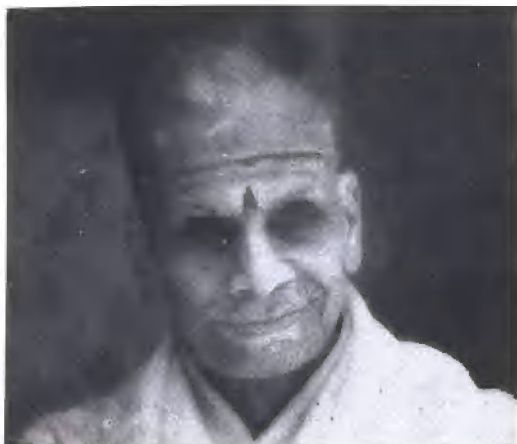
Acting thus and after recitation of the *sloka*, the three characters enact the stylised movements symbolic of moving about in a chariot.

[The performance ends with a ritual termed 'Mudi Akkitta' which is enacted at the end of a full act in Kutiyattam].

A joint presentation by artistes of Margi, Trivandrum; Kerala Kalamandalam, Cheruthuruthy; Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam, Tringalakuila







### • AMMANNUR MADHAVA CHAKYAR

Born in 1916 in Irinjalakuda, Kerala, Ammannur Madhava Chakyar comes of a family of Chakyars having a tradition of more than four centuries. He received training in Kutiyattam from his uncles Ammannur Chachu Chakyar and Madhava Chakyar and from other eminent masters like Manthitta Kunju Namboodiri, Kochikkava Thampuratty and Bhagavatar Kunjunni Thampuran. For several generations, family members of Ammannur Madhava Chakyar have been presenting Koothu and Kutiyattam in temples of Kerala as a hereditary vocation. He is attached to the Kodalmankkam temple, Irinjalakuda.

Guru Ammannur Madhava Chakyar is among the foremost exponents of Kutiyattam today. With his vast experience in performing and teaching he has made a significant contribution to the art of Kutiyattam. He has travelled within India and to different parts of the world for major national and international festivals and has appeared in several documentaries and films made by reputed organizations. He has been honoured by religious institutions like the Shiva Temple at Trichur, the temple at Ernakulam and the Kodalmankkam Temple at Irinjalakuda. He is a recipient of several national awards such as the Kalidasa Samman in 1992, the Padma Shri in 1982 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1979.





• **C.K. KRISHNAN NAMBIAR**

Born in 1924 in Chathakudam, Kerala, C.K. Krishnan Nambiar received training in Mizhavu from C.K. Govindan Nambiar and Moozhikulam Raghavan Nambiar. He is today one of the senior exponents of Mizhavu. He has travelled extensively performing with the Kerala Kalamandalam and the Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam troupes. Guru Krishnan Nambiar has performed for various films and video documentaries on Kutiyattam held at the Ammannur Gurukulam and has imparted training in Mizhavu to a number of students. As a Guru he has been associated with the Ammannur Gurukulam since 1982. He received the Kerala Sangeet Nataka Akademi Award in 1985.

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• **P.K. NARAYANAN NAMBIAR**



Born in May 1927 in Killikkurussimangalam, Ikkidi, Kerala, P.K. Narayanan Nambiar is the eldest son of the great master Mani Madhava Chakyar. He trained in the art of Koothu and Kutiyattam under his father and acquired proficiency in Mizhavu under Vadya Visharadan Kochampilli Saman Namboodiri and Meledath Govindan Nambiar. He learnt Sanskrit and Hindi from Panisseri Sankaran Namboodiripad, Meledath Govindan Nambiar and Kizhiyapatt Sankaran.

As a performer and teacher Guru Narayanan Nambiar has made a significant contribution to the art of Mizhavu playing and he is recognised as the foremost master of Mizhavu today. From 1966 to 1988 he taught at Kerala Kalamandalam where he planned and reoriented the Mizhavu training programme. His disciples are teachers in leading institutions of Kutiyattam like Kalamandalam, Margi, Ammannur Gurukulam and Mani Madhava Chakyar Gurukulam.

Guru Narayanan Nambiar has performed widely within Kerala, in India and abroad since the age of eleven. He has to his credit publications on Kutiyattam, notably on Mantharankam and Sree Krishna Charitham Nangiar Koothu, and also a detailed treatise on Talas in Kutiyattam.

He is a recipient of several awards including the Kerala Kalamandalam Award in 1985, Guruvayurappan Award in 1993 and Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Award in 1994.

Presently Guru Narayanan Nambiar is teaching several trainees under the Akademi Project of Support to Kutiyattam.



**MOOZHIKULAM KOCHUKUTTAN CHAKYAR**

Born in 1928 in Moozhikulam, Kerala in the Ammannur Chakyar family, Moozhikulam Kochukuttam Chakyar studied with Kitangur Narayana Chakyar, Painkulam Rama Chakyar, Irinjalakuda Madhava Chakyar and Mani Madhava Chakyar. He learnt Sanskrit from Kallankara Narayana Pisharodi and Kodasseri Kochunni Kartha.

Kochukuttan Chakyar has mastered the Perinchalloor, Cheria Parisha and Koyppa traditions in addition to the Ammannur style. He specialized in Vidusaka roles in Kutiyattam and oral rendering of Prabhandha Koothu (Purusharthas). He has performed Ramayana Prabhandha Koothu continuously for 41 days in the Koodal Manikam temple as a penance, apart from annual performance in various temples assigned to his family. Shri Kochukuttan Chakyar has been a Guru since 1981 at Margi, Trivandrum and has trained promising performers of Kutiyattam such as Margi Madhu, Narayanan, Margi Raman, Margi Sati and Usha. He has made a significant contribution to the art of Kutiyattam as a teacher and performer.

Moozhikulam Kochukuttan Chakyar has received several Awards including Kerala Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Sangeet Natak Akademi Award 1992 for his contribution to Kutiyattam.

**KITANGUR KUTTAPPAN CHAKYAR**  
**(C.N. Raman Chakyar)**



Born in 1928, Cheriya Parishayil Raman Chakyar, popularly known as Kitangur Kuttappan Chakyar, received training in Koothu and Kutiyattam under the guidance of his renowned father Painkulam Narayanan Chakyar and uncles Painkulam Rama Chakyar and Kitangur Narayanan Chakyar.

In addition to all the Prabandhas for Koothu and the normally performed Kutiyattam, he also learnt Anguliankam, Mattavilasam and Manthrankam and learnt Sanskrit in the Gurukula system. He is particularly known for Mantrankam.

He began performing since the age of fourteen at the royal temple at Tripunithura where his family members performed regularly. Kitangur Kuttappan Chakyar performed in the annual 28-day Kutiyattam performance at the Vellore temple for almost thirty years. He also taught at Kerala Kalamandalam for a short period.



**KALANILAYAM PARAMESWARAN**

Born in February 1943 in Muttolapuramkara, Erankulam Dist., Kerala, Kalanilayam Parameswaran initially studied Vesham at the Unnayi Warriar Smaraka Kalanilayam, Irinjalakuda. Later he received training in Chutti and Koppu, i.e., Kathakali make-up and costume-making under Kanzha Madhavan.

He is among the seniormost make-up artistes today for Kutiyattam and Kathakali. He has travelled extensively with the Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam for all major performances of Kutiyattam since 1986.

He is presently engaged in imparting training in the art of make-up and costume-making at the Unnayi Warriar Smaraka Kalanilayam, Irinjalakuda. Shri K. Parameswaran has received a gold medal from the Dr. K.N. Pisharody Smaraka Kathakali Club.

*Address: Unnayi Warriar Smaraka Kalanilayam, Irinjalakuda P.O., Trichur Dist. 680 121 Kerala*

• **G. VENU**

Born in July 1945 in Pappanamcode, Kerala, G. Venu received his training in Kutiyattam from Gurus, Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and Ammannur Parameswara Chakyar. He has performed in several major art festivals with the Ammannur Gurukulam.

G. Venu is well known for his contribution to the performing arts of Kerala as a research scholar for which he received the Government of India Fellowships and the Homi Bhabha Fellowship. Some of his major published works include *Tolpavakoothu – The shadow puppets of Kerala*, *Mudras in Kathakali*, *Production of a Play in Kutiyattam*, and *Mohiniyattam – the Lasya Dance*. In furtherance of his work for the arts of Kerala, he set up the Natana Kairali and also contributed in the formation of Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam at Irinjalakuda where he teaches at present. He has received the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award.

*Address: Natana Kairali, Ammannur Chakyar Madhom, Irinjalakuda, Trichur Dist. 680 121 Kerala*

• **P.M. RAMMOHAN**

Born in April 1947 in Karuvanam Kurussy, Kerala, P.M. Rammoohan learnt the art of Chutti and costume-making from P.V. Govind Warriar and V.V. Rama Warriar at Kerala Kalamandalam. P.M. Rammoohan has travelled extensively within India and abroad to participate in major festivals. He has received M.S. Namboodiri Memorial Award for his work in costume-making and as Chutti artiste. Presently, P.M. Rammoohan imparts training as Assistant Professor at Kerala Kalamandalam.

*Address: Sribhadran, P.O. Pankulam, Cheruthuruthy 679 531 Kerala*



## A.M. SIVAN NAMBOODIRI

Born in 1950 at Kanayam Kolappully, Shoranur, A.M. Sivan Namboodiri received his training in Kutiyattam from Painkulam Rama Chakyar and Mani Madhava Chakyar at the Kerala Kalamandalam. He received a scholarship from the Government of India for his studies. Now a well known Kutiyattam actor, Sivan Namboodiri has performed in numerous places in India and travelled abroad with the Kalamandalam troupe to participate in major dance festivals. He received the title of Kutiyattam Chakravarthi from Kalakshetra, Adyar. He is now teaching at Kalamandalam.

*Address: Vaisakhi, P.O. Ethanur, Via Koduvayur, Palghat Dist. 678 502 Kerala*



## KALAMANDALAM RAMA CHAKYAR

Born in 1950 in Painkulam, Kerala, Kalamandalam Rama Chakyar received training in Kutiyattam from his uncle, the renowned master Painkulam Rama Chakyar and studied Sanskrit under Unnikrishnan Elayath at Kerala Kalamandalam. A well known Kutiyattam actor and the leading member of the Kalamandalam troupe, he has travelled and performed at major festivals in India and countries like USA, Japan, Italy and throughout Europe. K. Rama Chakyar has received gold and silver medals for his performances from Margi and Kanchi Kamakoti Jayaindra Saraswathy. He is presently engaged in imparting training as Assistant Professor in Kerala Kalamandalam in the Kutiyattam Section.

*Address: Chakyar Madhom, Peruvanam, P.O. Cherppu, Trissur, Kerala*



## AMMANNUR PARAMESWARAN

Born in 1950 in Irinjalakuda, Kerala in the Ammannur family, Ammannur Parameswaran received training in Kutiyattam under his uncles Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and Ammannur Parameswara Chakyar. He received a scholarship and a junior fellowship from the Government of India for his training in Kutiyattam. He has been performing since the age of thirteen at the Koothambalams of Trichur and Irinjalakuda and participated in all the major Kutiyattam festivals presented by the Gurukulam in India and abroad. Presently, he is teaching at the Gurukulam.

*Address: Chakyar Madhom, Irinjalakuda, Trichur Dist. 680 121 Kerala*

**NIRMALA PANIKER**

Born in 1950 in Piravom, Kerala, Nirmala Paniker received training under Ammannur Madhava Chakyar at the Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Gurukulam. She acquired a diploma in dance from R.L.V. Fine Arts Academy and received training in Mohiniattam and Bharatanatyam styles of dance. Nirmala Paniker has received specialized training in Talam, rhythmic accompaniment with cymbals and recitation of the text in Kutiyattam. She has received a Junior Fellowship from the Department of Culture, Government of India.

Her published works are *Nangiar Koothu—the Classical Dance Theatre of the Nangiars* and *Mohiniattam—the Lasya Dance*. Presently she is engaged in teaching at Ammannur Gurukulam.

*Address: Natana Kairali, Ammannur Chakyar Madhom, Irinjalakuda, Trichur Dist. 680 121 Kerala*

**O.N. GOPINATHAN NAMBIAR**

Born in 1952 in Onakkoor, Kerala, O.N. Gopinathan Nambiar received training in the art of Mizhavu from Kerala Kalamandalam and acquired a first class post-graduate diploma. He practised Mizhavu and learnt to play Edakka at Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam and received a Junior Fellowship from the Government of India for his studies. He has been performing with the Ammannur Gurukulam since 1962.

*Address: Olakkattu Nambiar Madhom, Onakkoor P.O., Pampakuda via, Ernakulam Dist. Kerala*

• **KALAMANDALAM UNNIKRISHNAN NAMBIAR**



Born in 1954 in Kerala, Kalamandalam Unnikrishnan Nambiar received his initial training in the art of Pathakom, costume making and make-up of Kutiyattam. He later specialized as a Mizhavu player and is known as a senior disciple of Guru P.K. Narayanan Nambiar. He is presently teaching at Margi.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Veliyasala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*

## ARTISTES

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### M. KUNJAN

Born in 1957 in Perur, Kerala, M. Kunjan received training in the art of make-up from Sadanam Hari Kumar at the Gandhi Seva Sadan, Perur. He is now working at Kerala Kalamandalam as a make-up assistant.

*Address: Santosh Niwas, Gandhi Seva Sadan, Perur, Kerala*



### A.S. RANGAN

Born in 1959 in Trippunithura, A.S. Rangan received training in the art of make-up (Chutti) under R.L.V. Somadas at the R.L.V. Academy, Trippunithura. He has also received training in Kathakali Vesham from Kalamandalam Rajan. Presently, A.S. Rangan is serving as Chutti artiste at Kerala Kalamandalam.

*Address: Attath Veedu, North Fort Gate, Trippunithura 679 531 Kerala*



### M. NARAYANAN NAMBOODIRI

Born in 1959 in Mavelikkara, Kerala, M. Narayanan Namboodiri received training in Chenda and Edakka playing from Krishnankutty Poduval, Achuni Poduval and Chandra Mannadiar at Kerala Kalamandalam. He has travelled and performed all over India and throughout Europe. Now he imparts training as Chenda instructor at Kerala Kalamandalam.

*Address: Varanasi Illam, Mavelikkara 690 101 Kerala*



## ARTISTES

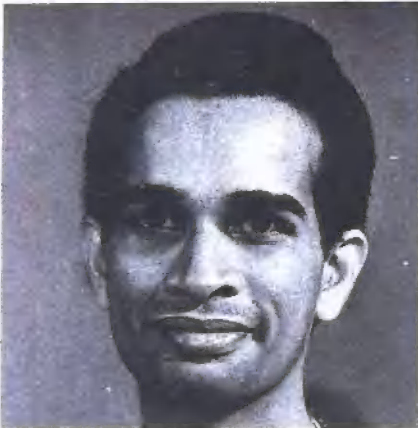
### R.L.V. SOMADAS



Born in 1952 in Pulimath, Killimanoor, he learnt Chenda and later specialised in Chutti and Kathakali costume-making. Studied under Kalamandalam Kesava Pothuval and Pulimath Kuttan Pillai. A leading make-up artiste, he is now a teacher in Chutti and manager of the Kathakali troupe of Margi, Trivandrum.

*Address: R.B. Bhavan, Inchakkadu, Post Kakkakurumu, Sooranad, Dist. Kollam, Kerala*

### KALAMANDALAM NARAYANA CHAKYAR



Born in 1959 at Painkulam in Kerala, Narayana Chakyar belongs to the Koypa Chakyar family. He is the grand nephew of Late Painkulam Rama Chakyar and grand son of Late Ammannur Chachu Chakyar. He studied Kutiyattam under Painkulam Rama Chakyar and Sanskrit under Prof. Unnikrishnan Elayath in Kalamandalam for about 10 years. Most of the Kutiyattams including Mantranka, Anguliyankam, Mattavilasam, Bhagavadajjukiyam and several Prabandhas have also been studied by him. He is doing his higher studies under Kitanpur Kuttappa Chakyar. He has visited and performed Kutiyattam in various places in India as well as abroad.

*Address: Chakyar Madhom, Painkulam, Cheruthuruthy, Trissur, Kerala*

### MARGI RAVEENDRAN



Born in 1961 in Attingal, studied Chutti (make-up) at Margi School at Trivandrum under R.L.V. Somadas, and now is an instructor there.

*Address: 'Kunnil Puthen Veedu', Post Kizhulvilam, Valiyakurumu Dist., Kerala*



### • P.N. GIRIJA



Born in 1959 in Kadavallor, Thrissur District, Kerala, P.N. Girija received training in Kutiyattam from Painkulam Rama Chakyar at Kerala Kalamandalam. She received a scholarship from the Department of Culture, Government of India. P.N. Girija Devi has performed at several national and international dance festivals all over India and abroad. She received Dr. K.N. Pisharoti Medal and now works as instructor of Kutiyattam at Kerala Kalamandalam Kutiyattam Faculty.

*Address: Instructor (Kutiyattam), Kerala Kalamandalam, Cheruthuruthy P.O., Thrissur Dist. 679 531 Kerala*

### • P.V. ISWARANUNNI



Born in 1959, P.V. Iswaranunni received training in Kutiyattam-Mizhavu under P.K. Narayanan Nambiar at Kerala Kalamandalam. He received a scholarship from Department of Culture, Government of India and acquired post graduation diploma from Kalamandalam. He also learnt Chakyarkoothu, Pathakam and Thimila. He has travelled and performed all over India and abroad.

He taught at Stony Brook University in New York and Smithsonian University, Washington as visiting professor of Mizhavu. He was honoured by Margi Kutiyattam school and now imparts training at Kerala Kalamandalam's Kutiyattam faculty as Assistant Professor of Mizhavu.

*Address: P.V. Iswaramunni, Instructor, Kerala Kalamandalam, Cheruthuruthy, Thrissur Dist. 679 531 Kerala*

### N. SUBRAMONIAN POTTI



Born in 1959, N. Subramonian Potti received training in the art of playing Edakka under Jneranathu Rama Poduval and Sadanam Vasu. Presently, he is associated with Margi Kutiyattam section as an Edakka artiste.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Valiyasala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*



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### • KALAMANDALAM C.K. SHYLAJA

Born in 1961 in Patteppadam, Kottanalloor, Kerala, C.K. Shylaja received training in Kutiyattam from Gurus Painkulam Rama Chakyar and Mani Madhava Chakyar at Kerala Kalamandalam and learnt Sanskrit from Unnikrishnan Elayath. She is also trained in Mohiniattam and has received a scholarship from the Government of India for her training.

Presently, she is working as Instructor in Kutiyattam at Kerala Kalamandalam.

*Address: Kalamandalam Shylaja, Kailas, P.O. Cheruthuruthy, Trichur 679 531 Kerala*



### • KALAMANDALAM MOHANAN

Born in 1961, Kalamandalam Mohanan received training in Thimila playing at Kerala Kalamandalam under Kalamandalam Sreedharan Nambeesan and Annanada Parameswara Marar. Presently, he is in Margi Kutiyattam Section as a Thimila artiste.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Valiyasala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*



### • C. RADHA KRISHNAN

Born in 1962 in Parassery, Cholayail House, Kerala, C. Radha Krishnan received training in Kutiyattam at Kerala Kalamandalam and acquired a six year diploma and two years specialization. Radha Krishnan has participated in major dance festivals in the country and has toured abroad with the Ammannur Chachur Chakyar Gurukulam and Kerala Kalamandalam troupes.

*Address: Girijalayam, Parassery Post, Kongad (Via) Pulakkad Dist, 678 631 Kerala*

## • MARGI RAMAN



Born in 1962 in the Ammannur family, Margi Raman received his initial training in Kutiyattam from his uncle Madhava Chakyar and later joined Margi where he pursues advanced training under M. Kochukuttam Chakyar.

He has performed in major roles such as Rama in *Soorpanakhankam* and Vibheeshanan in *Thoranayudham*.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Valiyasala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*

## • MARGI SATHI



Born in 1963, Margi Sathi received training in Kutiyattam in Kerala Kalamandalam for eight years under Painkulam Rama Chakyar and later at Margi. Margi Sathi received scholarship from Government of India. She has also received training in Nangiar Kuttu. She has played important roles as Sita in *Mayaseethankam* and Lalitha in *Parnasalaankam*. She has performed widely in India and abroad as an artiste of Margi troupe.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Valiyasala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*

## V.K. HARIHARAN



Born in 1965 in Madras, Tamil Nadu, V.K. Hariharan received training in Mizhavu at Kerala Kalamandalam and obtained a diploma. He has received a scholarship from the Department of Culture, Government of India, for his training in Mizhavu. V.K. Hariharan has participated in all Kutiyattam performances of the Ammannur Gurukulam in India and abroad.

*Address: Vattenattu Koottala House, Lakkidi P.O. Via Ottapalam, Palghat Dist., Kerala*

## ARTISTES

## P.V. RAVEENDRAN



Born in 1965 in Kappil Malapuram, Kerala, P.V. Raveendran is receiving training in Kutiyattam at Kerala Kalamandalam. He has obtained a diploma in Kutiyattam and received a scholarship from the Department of Culture.

*Address: Kappil Variyamm, Kappil P.O. Via Vandoor Malapuram, Kerala*

AMMANNUR KOCHUKUTTAN CHAKYAR MADHU  
(MARGI MADHU)

Born in 1966 in Moozhikkulam, Kerala, Ammannur Kochukuttan Chakyar Madhu received training in Koothu and Kutiyattam under Ammannur (Moozhikkulam) Kochukuttan Chakyar, P.K. Narayanan Nambiar and M. Madhavan Unni. He received the Junior Fellowship from the Department of Culture, Government of India. Margi Madhu has performed all over India in major dance festivals and countries abroad. He has performed for documentaries of AIR Doordarshan and Sangeet Natak Akademi. He assists his father and Guru Moozhikkulam Kochukuttan Chakyar in imparting training at Margi.

*Address: Sree Sylam, Moozhikkulam, Kurumassery P.O., Alwaye 683 579 Kerala*

## POTIYIL NARAYANA CHAKYAR



Born in 1966 in the Potiyil family, Potiyil Narayana Chakyar received his initial training in Kutiyattam at Irinjalakuda. Later, in 1991 he joined Margi and continues his higher training. Performs as a regular member of Margi troupe.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Veliyassala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*



## ARTISTES

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### • USHA RATNAM



Born in 1966, Usha Ratnam received training under Kalamandalam Girija and Shylaja at Kerala Kalamandalam. Presently, she is specializing at Margi, where she is a regular artiste.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Valiyasala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*

### MARGI NARAYANAN SAJEEV

1966



Born in 1966, Margi Narayanan Sajeev is the son of Moozhikulam Kochukuttan Chakyar. He received his initial training in the Potiyil tradition and specialized in Margi under Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and father Kochukuttan Chakyar. His important roles are Bali and Jatayu. He performs for the Margi and has travelled with the group to important festivals.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Valiyasala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*

### MARGI VENUGOPAL



Born in 1967, Margi Venugopal received training in the art of Chenda playing initially from Karuppa Velayudhan Pillai and later at Margi. His training in Edakka has been under Kalamandalam Raman Namboodiri and Ayamkudy Kuttappa Marar. Presently, he is working as Chenda artiste in Margi Kathakali Section. He accompanies Kutiyattam performances of Margi on Edakka.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Valiyasala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*

## ARTISTES

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### P. SUDHIN SHANKAR

Born in 1968 in Poothole, Trichur, Kerala, P. Sudhin Shankar received his training in the art of playing Kurum Kuzhal, a short pipe instrument, from his father, V. Govindakutty. He has also acquired a diploma in vocal music. He accompanies performances of Ammannur Gurukulam.

*Address: Puthoor House, 19/281, Poothole, Trichur 680 004 Kerala*



### KALANILAYAM P.P. UNNIKRISHNAN

Born in 1967 in Panjal, Kerala, Kalanilayam P.P. Unnikrishnan received training in playing Edakka and Chenda from Appu Marar, Kunjunni and Balaraman at Unnayi Warriar Smaraka Kala Nilayam and acquired his post-graduation diploma from Kalanilayam. He has participated in Kutiyattam performances of the Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam, apart from playing for Kathakali performances.

*Address: Padinjare Parangodath House, Panjal P.O., Cheruthuruthy (via), Thrissur Dist. 679 531 Kerala*



### P.K. USHA (USHA NANGIAR)

Born in 1969 in Chathakudam, Kerala, P.K. Usha received training in Kutiyattam and Nangiar Kuttu under Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and Ammannur Parameswaran Chakyar at Ammannur Smaraka Gurukulam. She has participated in Kutiyattam festivals conducted by the Gurukulam within India and in several countries abroad. At present she is receiving Fellowship as a senior student under Project of Kutiyattam. Kumari Usha is the daughter of Mizhavu Guru C.K. Krishnan Nambiar.

*Address: Kuzhupilli Madhom, Chathakudam Vallichira, Urakam, Trichur Dist. 680 562 Kerala*

## A.N. HARIHARAN



Born in 1969 in Punchapadam, Kerala, A.N. Hariharan received training in Mizhavu playing under P.V. Iswaranunni at the Kerala Kalamandalam. He received a scholarship from the Government of India for his training and has performed for many programmes of Kutiyattam with Kerala Kalamandalam troupe.

*Address: A.N. Hariharan, Allikal House, P.O. Punchapadam, via Olavakkode, Palghat Dist., Kerala*

## KALANILAYAM SAJI



Born in 1971 in Muttolapuramkara, Ernakulam District, Kerala, Kalanilayam Saji received training in the art of make-up (Chutti) in Kathakali and Kutiyattam at Unnaiy Warrier Smaraka Kalanilayam and Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam at Irinjalakuda. After acquiring post-graduate diploma, Kalanilayam Saji has been participating in the performances of Kalanilayam and the Ammannur Gurukulam as a Chutti artiste.

*Address: Thattamattathil House, Karikunnam P.O. Plantation, Via Thodupuzha, Idukki Dist. 685 586 Kerala*

## KALAMANDALAM ACHYUTHANANDAN



Born in 1972, Kalamandalam Achyuthanandan received his training in Mizhavu playing at Kerala Kalamandalam. Presently he is working in Margi as an accompanist and continues higher training.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A2 4/603, Valiyavazala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*



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### K.K. KRISHNA KUMAR



Born in 1972 in Painkulam, Kerala, K.K. Krishna Kumar received his training in Kutiyattam from Kalamandalam Rama Chakyar, Kalamandalam Siva Namboodiri, P.N. Girija Devi and C.K. Shylaja. He continues his higher training at the Kerala Kalamandalam.

*Address: Kalanikkal House, Painkulam P.O., Cheruthurthy 679 531 Kerala*

### K.P. NARAYANAN NAMBIAR



Born in 1973 in Edanad, Kerala, K.P. Naryanan Nambiar belongs to the traditional family of Edattu Nambiar Madhom. He has acquired a diploma and is receiving training in Mizhavu in Kerala Kalamandalam as a scholarship from Department of Culture.

*Address: Kizhakke Nambiar Madhom, Edanadu, Chowara, P.O. Aluva*

### KALAMANDALAM RAMAN UNNI



Born in 1974 in Kerala, Kalamandalam Raman Unni had his Mizhavu training at the Kerala Kalamandalam. He is now working in Margi, Trivandrum and continues higher training as well.

*Address: C/o Margi, Kutiyattam Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Valiyasala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 036*

• **P.P. RAJEEV**



Born in 1974 in Cheruthuruthy, Kerala, P.P. Rajeev received training in Mizhavu at Kerala Kalamandalam. He received a scholarship from Department of Culture, Government of India.

After acquiring his diploma he has been playing Mizhavu for Ammannur Gurukulam.

*Address: Padiparambil House, Cheruthuruthy P.O., Trichur Dist. 679 531 Kerala*

**P.K. HARISH KUMAR**



Born in 1977 at Killikkurussimangalam, P.K. Harish Kumar received training in Mizhavu from his grandfather Mani Madhava Chakyar and father P.K. Narayanan Nambiar at Mani Madhava Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam. He has also trained in Padhakam Chakyarkuttu. Harish Kumar has received scholarship from Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi and is presently being trained under Sangeet Natak Akademi's Project of Kutiyattam.

*Address: Sudharma, Lakkidi P.O., Palakkad Dist. 679 301 Kerala*

• **K. KANAKA KUMAR**



Born in 1978 in Deshamangalam, Kerala, Kanaka Kumar received training in Kutiyattam under K. Rama Chakyar and A.M. Sivan Namboodiri. He has completed the four-year diploma and continues training at Kerala Kalamandalam.

*Address: Kolur Kovil, Deshamangalam P.O., Via Cheruthuruthy, Trichur*

## ARTISTES

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### S. VISWASREE

Born in 1978 in Valtappara in Kerala, Viswasree is a disciple of P.N. Girija Devi and C.K. Shylaja, for her training in Kutiyattam and Nangiar Kuttu. She is presently a post diploma student at Kerala Kalamandalam.

*Address: Kerala Cottage, Chitkatha, Valtappara, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala*



### T.R. SOORAJ

(Nangiar)

Born in 1979 in Trichur, Kerala, Sooraj is receiving training in Kutiyattam under Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and Ammannur Parameswara Chakyar at Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam. He has performed at festivals conducted by the Gurukulam and is receiving Sangeet Natak Akademi scholarship under its Project of Kutiyattam.

*Address: Thekke Pattath House, Sangameswara Vilaxam Road, Irinjalakuda, Trichur Dist., Kerala*



### M. SMITHA

Born in 1979 in Painkulam, Kerala, M. Smitha received training in Kutiyattam and Nangiar Kuttu under C.K. Shylaja and P.N. Girija Devi. Presently, she is undergoing training at Kerala Kalamandalam for final year diploma course.

*Address: Kiliyam Paranthil, P.O. Painkulam, Cheruthuruthy, Kerala*



**RANJEETH R.** (Ammannur)



Born in 1980, Ranjeeth R. is receiving his training in Kutiyattam under Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and Ammannur Parameswara Chakyar at Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam.

At present he is receiving scholarship under Sangeet Natak Akademi Project of Kutiyattam.

*Address: Santhalaya Madhom, Sarala Mandiram, Padinjare Nada, Mannarassala P.O., Haripad, Alapuzha Dist., Kerala*

**KAPILA VENU**



Born in 1982 in Kothamangalam, Kerala, Kapila Venu is training in Kutiyattam and Nangiar Kuttu under Ammannur Madhava Chakyar, G. Venu and Usha Nangiar at Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam. She is also learning Mohiniattam on a Cultural Talent Search Scholarship.

*Address: Natana Kairali, Ammannur Chakyar Madhom, Irinjalakuda, Trichur Dist. 680 121 Kerala*

## KERALA KALAMANDALAM

Founded in 1930 by Vallathol Narayana Menon, Kerala Kalamandalam is a pioneering teaching institution for the classical performing arts of Kerala. Kutiyattam was introduced in the Kalamandalam curriculum in 1965 and the late Painkulam Rama Chakyar was appointed the first guru in the discipline. P.K. Narayanan Nambiar, who planned the course in Mizhavu, also served Kalamandalam till 1980. The institution offers a six-year diploma course and a one-year post diploma course in Kutiyattam, and a four-year diploma course and a one-year post diploma course in Mizhavu. The training in both streams is intensive, including a sound knowledge of Sanskrit and several *kavyas* and plays. Apart from training, Kerala Kalamandalam has also conducted seminars on Kutiyattam and published the work *Natyakalapadrumam* by the Late Mani Madhava Chakyar.

Address: Vallathol Nagar,  
Cheruthuruthy 679 531 Kerala

## AMMANNUR CHACHU CHAKYAR SMARAKA GURUKULAM

Named after one of the leading performers of the Ammannur family, this Kutiyattam institution functions on the lines of traditional gurukulam. It was established in 1982 with the objective of giving training in Kutiyattam to select students strictly in the traditional Gurukulam style and to revive several classical plays. Madhava Chakyar and Parameswara Chakyar are the incharge of the training at the institution. There is no fixed syllabus or period of training, which progresses according to the disciple's ability to learn. The Gurukulam organises an annual Kutiyattam Festival. Seven such festivals, each of 12 days' duration, have been held so far. The students of Gurukulam have also performed Kutiyattam, Kuttu and Nangiar Kuttu in the Kuttabalams of various important temples in Kerala. The institution is receiving substantial support for its training and performing activities under Sangeet Natak Akademi's Kutiyattam Project.

Address: Ammannur Chakyar  
Madhom, Irinjalakuda,  
Trichur Dist. 680 121 Kerala

## MARGI

A school for the classical performing arts of Kerala, Margi was established in 1971 by the efforts of the late D. Appukkuttan Nair. The attempt was to set up a repertory to sustain the performance tradition of Kutiyattam and to revive important Sanskrit plays whose performances had seized. Adhering to the traditional *guru-shishya* teaching system, Margi initially had on its staff Ammannur Madhava Chakyar – a visiting acharya and M. Kochukuttan Chakyar as a resident guru. In the past few years, with support from Sangeet Natak Akademi under the Kutiyattam Project, Margi has been able to organise a systematic schedule for performances and has in the process considerably enhanced the performance repertoire of Kutiyattam. Mizhavu training at Margi is conducted by Kalamandalam Unnikrisnan Nambiar. The institution has produced a number of proficient students over the past few years, both in Kutiyattam and Nanagiar Kuttu.

Address: Margi, Kutiyattam  
Vidhyalaya, TC A23/603, Valiyasala,  
Thiruvananthapuram 695 036

**AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS OF KUTTIYATTAM AND NANGIAR KUTTU  
AVAILABLE IN SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI ARCHIVES**

Date	Particulars	Audio Hrs:Mts	Video Hrs:Mts
02.06.66	TORANAYUDDHAM : Performance by artistes of Kerala Kalamandalam led by Painkulam Rama Chakyar	01:50	
26.06.66	Sutradhara – do –	00:45	–
	JATAYUVADHAM – do –	00:50	–
	TORANAYUDDHAM : Painkulam Rama Chakyar as Hanuman	00:45	–
28.03.72	TORANAYUDDHAM : Performance by Painkulam Rama Chakyar and group	01:10	–
29.03.72	SUBHADRADHANANJAYAM : Performance by Painkulam Rama Chakyar and group	01:50	–
25.03.74	Satvikabhinaya, Chakyar Kuttu : Performance by Mani Madhava Chakyar	00:35	00:12
	Excerpts from SUBHADRADHANANJAYAM by Mani Madhava Chakyar and group	00:15	00:05
25.03.80	ABHISEKA NATAKA : Performance by Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and group	01:30	–
27.03.80	Excerpts from PARVATI VIRAHAM: Performance by Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and group	00:45	01:30
	Sutradhara	00:10	–
28.03.80	Interview of Ammannur Madhava Chakyar by G. Venu	00:25	–
18.10.81	PARVATI VIRAHAM : Performance by Mani Madhava Chakyar	00:30	01:80
	SUBHADRADHANANJAYAM : Performance by Mani Madhava Chakyar and group	00:20	01:13
19.10.81	Interview of Mani Madhava Chakyar by Ranganayaki Ayyangar	00:45	–
22.03.82	Demonstration by Ammannur Madhava Chakyar	00:47	–
13.12.82 to 26.12.82	ASHOKAVANIKANKAM : Performance by Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and group	–	13:50
16.07.84	Interview of Mani Madhava Chakyar by K.N. Paniker and other contextual shots for documentary	–	01:52
25.01.90	Excerpts from SUBHADRADHANANJAYAM by Margi Madhu	–	00:54



Date	Particulars	Audio Hrs:Mts	Video Hrs:Mts
01.08.92	VIDUSHAKAN PURAPPAD : Performance by artistes of Margi, Trivandrum led by M. Kochukuttan Chakyar as Vidusaka	—	01:03
02.08.92	Excerpts from UDYANA PRAVESAM : Performance by Margi Madhu and artistes of Margi, Trivandrum	—	01:30
02.08.92	Excerpts from SRIKRISHNALEELA : Nangiar Kuttu : Performance by Margi Sathi	—	01:10
03.08.92	ANGULIYANKAM : Performance by Ammannur Parameswaran Chakyar	—	00:48
04.08.92	Hastamudras by Ammannur Parameswaran Chakyar as Vidusaka	—	00:35
	Hastamudras in Nangiar Kuttu by Nirmala Paniker and Usha Nangiar	—	00:16
	Nangiar Kuttu by Usha Nangiar	—	00:30
	Mudrabhinaya by Ammannur Madhava Chakyar	—	02:00
05.08.92	Hastamudras : Used in Ramayana Samkshepa by Ammannur Madhava Chakyar, explained by G. Venu (in English)	—	04:34
	Naama Mudras	—	00:18
07.02.93	SUBHADRADHANANJAYAM : Performance by M. Kochukuttan Chakyar and others	—	03:00
	Nangiar Kuttu: Performance by Margi Sathi	—	01:38

#### Video documentary films compiled by Akademi from its archival material:

Ramayana in Kathakali and Kutiyattam (1973) 20 mts.

Master at work : Mani Madhava Chakyar (1994) 36 mts.

Parvati Viraham : Mani Madhava Chakyar as Ravana (1994) 35 mts.

#### Special archival recordings proposed during Kutiyattam Mahotsavam (apart from festival performances and lec-dem)

Discussion : *Contribution of Ammannur Chachu Chakyar and Kitangur Rama Chakyar*  
Participants : Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and K.P. Narayana Pisharody

Discussion : *Contribution of Painkulam Rama Chakyar*  
Participants : Killimangalam Vasudevan Namboodiripad, Prof. V.S. Sharma and  
Kalamandalam Rama Chakyar

Interview of M. Kochukuttan Chakyar by S. Ganesa Aiyar

Demonstration of Mantrankam by Kitangur Kuttappa Chakyar

Demonstration of Kutiyattam Ragas by Ammannur Madhava Chakyar

Demonstration of 'Nityakriya – Rituals in Kutiyattam' with explanation by S. Ganesa Aiyar

Performance of Mattavilasam, Naganandam, Bhagavadajjukkiyam by Kerala Kalamandalam

Performance of Kalyana Saugandhikam by Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam







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